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ITALIAN AND SPANISH INFLUENCE ON SELECTED WORKS OF MEXICAN COMPOSERS: MARÍA GREVER, IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN "TATA NACHO," AND AGUSTÍN LARA

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ITALIAN AND SPANISH INFLUENCE ON SELECTED WORKS OF
MEXICAN COMPOSERS: MARÍA GREVER, IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN
“TATA NACHO,” AND AGUSTÍN LARA

Doctor of Musical Arts Project

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts in the School of Music
at the University of Kentucky

By
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Lexington, Kentucky

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Lexington, Kentucky

2014

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ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

ITALIAN AND SPANISH INFLUENCE ON SELECTED WORKS OF MEXICAN COMPOSERS: MARÍA GREVER IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN “TATA NACHO” AND AGUSTÍN LARA

The last decades of the 19th Century and the first decades of the 20th Century encompass a revolutionary movement worldwide. The growth and advances throughout all disciplines of study and especially the collaboration, across Literature, Music, Performing Arts, Culture and Politics became stronger and more evident than ever before.

As the Mexican Revolution (1910) developed in frightening fights, the country became increasingly insecure and violent. It was the duty of the living artist to create pathways to escape reality, embellishing the surroundings with its music, paintings and poetry. This climate is what paved the way to the bohemian living-style that developed in the main cities gaining power and acceptance, especially in Mexico City.

Maria Grever, Tata Nacho and Agustín Lara represent a handful of composers/performers who wrote in the style of *canciones* contributing to the ideal of stability, hope and love in all forms and fashions. They represent the complexity of an era thru an outpouring of songs, depicting the romanticism of Mexico's ever changing times. They are also key figures for the growth and expansion of Mexican music throughout the world, aided by the technological advances such as the first recordings and radio broadcasting.

KEYWORDS: Maria Grever, Tata Nacho, Ignacio Fernández Esperón, Agustín Lara, Canción

Manuel Mario Castillo Sapién

Student's Signature

August 12 2014

Date

ITALIAN AND SPANISH INFLUENCE ON SELECTED WORKS OF MEXICAN
COMPOSERS: MARÍA GREVER IGNACIO FERNÁNDEZ ESPERÓN “TATA
NACHO” AND AGUSTÍN LARA

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Acknowledgements

I have always been attracted to music since I can remember. I started singing because I liked it and nobody told me I should do something else instead. I am grateful to my parents Dr. Alfredo Castillo Sahagún and Gloria Josefina Sapién de Castillo because they embraced not only good music but nourished us with solid values. I grew up listening and singing during many evenings spent in the living room with my family. We listened to a wide variety of music that included: Opera, Spanish Zarzuela, Neapolitan Songs and *Canciones* from my beloved Mexico. From my childhood I recall the voices of Plácido Domingo, Alfredo Kraus, Giuseppe Di Stefano and Luciano Pavarotti mixed with the ones of Pedro Infante, Jorge Negrete, Pedro Vargas, José Mojica, Genaro Salinas, Juan Arvizu, Alfonso Esparza Oteo, and many others; those were my first "music teachers."

I am indebted and thankful to many people and for many reasons. Each one of them have something in common, besides their appreciation for my artistry, there is their support towards my career, their encouragement to reach my goals and more importantly, their undivided friendship; those are a constant for which I am eternally grateful. Knowing that I cannot list all and running the risk of forgetting many names, I ask your forgiveness in advance for any omission.

Without any particular order, I want to thank my family at Central Christian Church, with special mention to the Chancel Choir and Michael Rintamaa, I would also like to thank Jonathan Green, Ricardo Saeb, Andrew Serce, Daniel Silva, Dr. Everett McCorvey, Prof. Cynthia Lawrence, Nan McSwain, Prof. Cliff Jackson, Dr. Joseph Stemple, Dr. Sandy Archer, Dudley Herron, Joyce Herron, Carroll Crouch, Janice

Crouch, Josh Santana, John Elliot, Harry Richart, Dr. Joanna Sloggy, my siblings: Alfredo, Gloria, Mercedes, Jesús, Alicia and Rafael, and all of the people that shared a word of advice, encouragement, gratitude and/or wisdom.

I also want to thank Mark Brill and Alejandro L. Madrid; respected scholars that were very kind in sharing their knowledge and expertise in a variety of subjects that helped me on my dissertation. Last but not least, there is no purpose for an artist without an appreciative audience, through music, I am able to convey you my sentiments, and, you are able to express your own emotions without the need of the usual conversation. In this way, we all are connected and able to share our most inner feelings without fears.

From the bottom of my heart, thank you all!

Manuel Castillo

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Chapter One: The World

Introduction

"Mexico today is a rich blend of Spanish and aboriginal cultures, and it requires expert knowledge to distinguish where the Aztec ends and the Spanish begins in the art, the music, the customs and the manners of modern Mexico"

The Other Americans (1943)

The last decades of the 19th century and the first decades of the 20th century encompassed a revolutionary movement worldwide. The growth and advances throughout all disciplines of study and, especially the collaboration, whether on purpose or by cause-effect, across literature, music, performing arts, culture and politics became stronger and more evident than ever before. Today, we could call this period the *globalization period* in its childhood.

In Mexico, however, a revolution of a different kind took place. The Mexican Revolution of 1910 developed in frightening fights; the country became increasingly unstable garnering a reputation for insecurity and violence. Nevertheless, it also resulted in fertile ground for new creations. The living artist created pathways to escape reality, embellishing the surroundings with music, paintings and poetry. This manifestation paved the way to the bohemian lifestyle that developed in the main cities gaining power and acceptance, especially in Mexico City.

María Grever, Ignacio Fernández Esperón "Tata Nacho" and Agustín Lara represent a handful of composer-performers who wrote in the style of *canciones* contributing to the national ideal of stability, hope and love in all forms and fashions.

They represented the complexity of an era through an outpouring of songs, depicting the romanticism of Mexico's ever-changing times. They also became key figures in the growth and expansion of Mexican music throughout the world, aided by the technological advances, such as the first recordings and first radio broadcasting programs. These three names always appeared in association with an extensive list of singers from the past and present, including Enrico Caruso, Tito Schipa, José Mojica, Plácido Domingo, José Carreras, Luciano Pavarotti, Jorge Negrete, Pedro Infante, Juan Diego Flores, and others.

A most persistent problem I encountered during this investigation was the little amount of recent scholarly studies for this period in the realm of popular music in relation with the Mexican society of the early 20th century; which is directly connected to the lives and social interaction of the composers here presented. One of the most recent examples of research on this topic is by Alejandro L. Madrid, *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and Ideas on Post-Revolutionary Mexico* (2008). Madrid's book calls for a re-examination of the "orthodox history of music that turns composers Manuel M. Ponce (1882-1948) and Carlos Chavez (1899-1978) into icons," as well as the links between government, patronage and the "dynamics of power in particular historical context." We can add to the debate whether or not Mexican composers imitated and/or borrowed their inspiration from other parts of the globe, or found genuine Mexican musical ideas. In *Sounds of the Modern Nation*, the author's introduction reads:

"This book is the result of my attempts to...explore the notions of imitation and authenticity in relation to the political construction of the discourses that allowed Mexican artists and intellectuals of the 1920s to

write their place in Mexican society and history, to negotiate individual and collective desires, and to imagine their futures and that of the nation...this work suggests an alternative reading of 1920s Mexican musical life."

Another problem in researching this period is the surrounding myths and fantasies that arose with the bohemian lifestyle of the early 20th century in Mexico. In this case, not only can the media be blamed, but even more so, the composers themselves that fabricated stories about facts of their lives and musical compositions. In an effort to clarify these discrepancies, the present work will present the most accurately possible biography for each composer and a short list of their most representative and/or important works.

One of the challenges encountered in collecting data was the difficulty in obtaining published music from this era. Most of the musical scores were out of stock and very few of them have been republished. Other questions that arose from this topic were: What is the relation, if any, between the binary form of the *canciones* and the society of the time? Is there a reason for the lack of development in the musical motives? What is the connection between the so-called popular music and what we define as classical music? If the Mexican *Canción* shares musical traits with the songs of Italy and Spain, what are the traits that define the *Canción*? Does the *Canción* in Mexico differ from those in Italy and Spain? How are they similar while keeping their characteristic nationality?

Moreover, the present work aims to display the lives and works of María Grever, Ignacio Fernández Esperón "Tata Nacho" and Agustín Lara through a different light and

scope by understanding the society in which they lived. It does not represent an exhaustive historical account of the musical history of Mexico. There are other important books that provide such historical accounts, like Miguel Galindo's *Historia de la Música Mejicana* (1933); Gabriel Saldivar's *Historia de la Música en México* (1934); Otto Sierra-Mayer's *Panorama de la Música Mexicana* (1941); Claes Af Geijerstam's *Popular Music in Mexico* (1976); and Alejandro L. Madrid's *Sounds of the Modern Nation: Music, Culture, and Ideas in Post-revolutionary Mexico* (2008), to name a few.

The World: Cultural Context (1890-1950)

What Happens in Sixty Years?

The evolution of the human race, as we trace it back millions of years ago, is full of paradigms, surprises, achievements and failures. For example, towards the end of the 19th century, the world gained invaluable inventions that are in some form still in use today, like the phonograph (1876) and the telephone (1877). In the field of Fine Arts, we find the creation of world-class orchestras like the Boston Symphony (1881) and the Berlin Philharmonic (1882), or the construction of the old Metropolitan Opera House (1883). Certainly, there was more than one transcendental occurrence every year.

Conversely, the last ten years of the 19th century and the first 50 years of the 20th century were perhaps the most dramatic and intense we have ever lived in history. It is basically impossible to make sense of all the international affairs; they range from World War I (1914-1918) to the first transatlantic flight from New York to Paris (1927); from the Holocaust (1933-1945) and World War II (1939-1945) to the first NBC television broadcast (1940); and the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945) and Civil Wars worldwide. Then again, in the realm of music for instance, we find the creation of most of the standard operatic repertoire of our time from what many regard as the last great operatic composers: Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901), Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924), Richard Strauss (1864-1949) and Benjamin Britten (1913-1976).

It seems that challenging times provoke artists' inspiration to create excelling works. The social problems of their time become their prime material and their opus is a direct response to the problems of the world. The purpose of the following timeline is to give justice to the composers and their works here considered. Let us remember that the

canciones became the vehicle through which composers in Latin America shared their vision of the world, through the simplicity of their melodies and even more importantly, the lyrics: a direct response to the problems of their times.

1800s Timeline

- 1803 Beethoven Third Symphony, *Eroica*. Beginning of the Romantic period.
- 1807 Beethoven completes his Fifth Symphony.
- 1810 Mexico's Independence (1810-1821) from Spain (Nov. 20).
- 1815 Schubert writes *Der Erlkönig*.
- 1816 Gioacchino Rossini's *The Barber of Seville*, based on Pierre Beaumarchais's play, debuts in Rome. His *Otello* opens in Naples.
- 1819 Simón Bolívar liberates New Granada (now Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador) as Spain loses hold on South American countries; named president of Colombia.
- 1824 Beethoven's Ninth Symphony premieres in Viena.
- 1825 First passenger-carrying railroad in England.
- 1827 Ludwig van Beethoven dies (b. 1770).
Mendelssohn's premieres *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.
- 1828 Franz Schubert dies (b. 1797)
- 1832 Donizetti's *L'elisir d'amore* premieres in Milan.
- 1835 Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* premieres at Teatro San Carlo, Naples.
Vincenzo Bellini dies (b. 1801).
- 1836 Mexican army besieges Texans in Alamo. Entire garrison, including Davy Crockett and Jim Bowie, wiped out. Texans gain independence from Mexico after winning Battle of San Jacinto.

1800s Timeline (continued)

- 1839 The New York Philharmonic is established.
- 1842 Verdi's *Nabucco* premieres at La Scala, Milan.
- 1844 Samuel F. B. Morse patents telegraph.
- 1846 U.S. declares war on Mexico. California and New Mexico annexed by U.S.
- 1848 U.S.-Mexico War ends; Mexico cedes claims to Texas, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Nevada. Revolt in Paris: Louis Philippe abdicates; Louis Napoleon elected president of French Republic.
- Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's published the Communist Manifesto.
- Harriet Tubman escapes from slavery and joins the Underground Railroad.
- Gaetano Donizetti dies (b. 1797).
- 1851 Verdi's *Rigoletto* premieres at La Fenice, Venice.
- 1853 Verdi's *La Traviata* premieres at La Fenice, Venice.
- 1854 Liszt conducts the first performance of his symphonic poems in Weimar.
- 1858 Abraham Lincoln makes antislavery speech in Springfield, Ill.: "This Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free."
- 1859 Work begins on Suez Canal.
- Charles Darwin's published *On the Origin of Species*.
- 1861 U.S. Civil War begins (1861-65).
- Louis Pasteur's germ theory.
- Independent Kingdom of Italy proclaimed under Sardinian Vittorio Emmanuel II.
- 1863 French capture Mexico City; proclaim Archduke Maximilian of Austria emperor.
- Battle of Gettysburg.

1800s Timeline (continued)

- 1867 French leave Mexico; Emperor of Mexico Maximilian von Habsburg-Archduke of Austria executed.
Johann Strauss's *Blue Danube*.
- 1868 Revolution in Spain; Queen Isabella "The Catholic" deposed, flees to France.
In U.S., Fourteenth Amendment giving civil rights to blacks is ratified.
Gounod's *Romeo et Juliette* premieres in Paris.
Gioachino Rossini dies (b. 1792)
- 1871 Verdi's *Aida* premieres in Cairo, Egypt.
- 1872 Jules Verne's *Around the World in 80 Days*.
- 1874 Verdi's *Requiem* premieres in Milan.
- 1876 Alexander Graham Bell patents the telephone.
Wagner's *The Ring Cycle* is performed in full at the Bayreuth Festival.
Johannes Brahms completes his First Symphony.
- 1877 Thomas Edison invents the phonograph.
Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake*.
- 1875 Julián Carrillo is born (d. 1965)
- 1879 Thomas A. Edison invents practical electric light.
- 1880 Tchaikovsky writes the *1812 Overture*.
- 1881 The Boston Symphony Orchestra is established.
- 1882 Manuel M. Ponce is born (d. 1948)
The Berlin Philharmonic is established.
- 1883 Brooklyn Bridge and Metropolitan Opera House completed.

1800s Timeline (continued)

- 1885 María Grever is born (d.1951). Jerome Kern is born (d. 1945)
- 1887 Verdi's *Otello* premieres at La Scala, Milan.
- 1888 Richard Strauss writes the symphonic poem, *Don Juan*.
- 1889 Eiffel Tower built for the Paris exposition.
- 1890 Tchaikovsky's *The Sleeping Beauty* debuts in St. Petersburg.
- 1891 Carnegie Hall opens in New York. Cole Porter is born (d. 1964)
- 1893 New Zealand becomes first country in the world to grant women the vote.
- Dvorak composes his Ninth Symphony *From the New World*.
- Verdi's last opera *Falstaff* premieres at La Scala, Milan.
- Charles Gounod dies (b. 1818)
- 1894 Ignacio Fernández Esperón "Tata Nacho" is born (d. 1968)
- 1895 X-rays discovered by German physicist Wilhelm Roentgen.
- Auguste and Louis Lumière premiere motion pictures at a café in Paris.
- 1896 Alfred Nobel establishes prizes for peace, science, and literature.
- First modern Olympic games held in Athens, Greece.
- Puccini's *La Bohème* premieres in Turin.
- 1897 Agustín Lara is born (d. 1970)
- 1898 George Gershwin is born (d. 1937).
- Spanish-American War begins. U.S. destroys Spanish fleet near Santiago, Cuba.
- 1899 Carlos Chávez (d. 1978) and Silvestre Revueltas (d. 1940) are born.

1900s Timeline

- 1900 Sigmund Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams*.
Puccini's *Tosca* premieres in Rome.
Jean Sibelius's *Finlandia* premieres in Helsinki.
Aaron Copland is born (d. 1990)
- 1901 Giuseppe Verdi dies (b. 1813).
Mahler's Fourth Symphony debuts in Munich.
- 1902 Enrico Caruso's first gramophone recording.
Claude Debussy's premieres *Pelléas and Mélisande* at the Opéra Comique.
- 1903 Orville and Wilbur Wright fly first powered, controlled plane at Kitty Hawk, N.C.
Henry Ford organizes Ford Motor Company.
- 1904 The London Symphony Orchestra is established.
Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* premieres at La Scala, Milan.
- 1905 Albert Einstein's special theory of relativity and other key theories in physics.
Franz Lehar's Merry Widow premieres.
- 1906 Enrico Caruso in San Francisco. San Francisco's earthquake leaves 500 dead or missing and destroys about four square miles of the city (April 18).
- 1907 Gustav Mahler begins work on *Das Lied von der Erde*.
Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O Jive)* introduces cubism.
- 1910 Mexican Revolution: Porfirio Diaz, (president 1876-1911), replaced by Francisco I. Madero.
Igor Stravinsky completes *The Firebird* for Sergei Diaghilev's Ballets.

1900s Timeline (continued)

- 1911 Ernest Rutherford discovers the structure of the atom.
Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. Irving Berlin's *Alexander's Ragtime Band*.
- 1912 Balkan Wars (1912–1913) resulting from territorial disputes.
Titanic sinks on maiden voyage.
- 1913 Henry Ford develops first moving assembly line.
Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*.
Marcel Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase* shocks public.
- 1914 World War I (1914-1918) Austrian Archduke Francis Ferdinand and wife Sophie are assassinated; Austria declares war on Serbia, Germany on Russia and France, Britain on Germany. Panama Canal officially opened.
U.S. Marines occupy Veracruz, Mexico, intervening in civil war to protect American interests.
- 1915 Lusitania sunk by German submarine.
Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity.
- 1916 John Joseph Pershing fails in raid into Mexico in quest of rebel Pancho Villa.
Margaret Sanger opens first birth control clinic.
Jeannette Rankin becomes first woman elected to Congress.
Charles Ives finishes his Fourth Symphony.
- 1918 Claude Debussy dies (b. 1862). Worldwide influenza epidemic strikes; by 1920, nearly 20 million are dead. In U.S., 500,000 perish.

1900s Timeline (continued)

- 1919 The Prohibition (1919-33) or Volstead Act adopted in the USA.
- Alcock and Brown make first trans-Atlantic nonstop flight.
- Mahatma Gandhi begins his nonviolent resistance movement against British rule in India.
- Chicago becomes the home of Jazz.
- 1920 League of Nations holds first meeting at Geneva, Switzerland.
- US Women's suffrage (19th) amendment ratified.
- 1922 Mussolini marches on Rome; forms Fascist government.
- 1923 Widespread Ku Klux Klan violence in U.S.
- Bessie Smith "Queen of the Blues," records *Down Hearted Blues*.
- 1924 Giacomo Puccini dies (b. 1858).
- Adolf Hitler's publishes *Mein Kampf*.
- The Juilliard School opens in New York.
- Maurice Ravel's *Bolero* premieres in Paris.
- George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* premieres in New York.
- 1925 Nellie Tayloe Ross elected governor of Wyoming; first woman governor elected in U.S. Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* premieres in Berlin.
- 1926 Gertrude Ederle of U.S. is first woman to swim English Channel.
- Ernest Hemingway publishes *The Sun Also Rises*.
- Puccini's *Turandot* premieres at La Scala, Milan.
- 1927 Charles A. Lindbergh flies first successful solo nonstop flight NY-Paris.
- The Jazz Singer*, with Al Jolson, becomes the first part-talking motion picture.

1900s Timeline (continued)

- 1928 Alexander Fleming discovers penicillin.
Final volume of Oxford English Dictionary published after 44 years of research.
- 1929 Trotsky expelled from USSR.
Lateran Treaty establishes independent Vatican City.
The Great Depression.
- 1930 XEW radio, "The Voice of Latin America From México" of Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta starts transmissions.
- 1931 Spain becomes a republic with overthrow of King Alfonso XIII.
Al Capone sentenced 11 years in prison (freed in 1939; dies in 1947).
"The Star Spangled Banner" officially becomes US national anthem.
- 1932 Amelia Earhart is first woman to fly Atlantic solo.
Duke Ellington writes *It Don't Mean a Thing, If It Ain't Got That Swing*.
Begins the swing era of the 1930s and 1940s.
- 1933 The Holocaust (1933-45). Hitler appointed German chancellor, gets dictatorial powers. Reichstag fire in Berlin.
- 1936 The Mexican president Lázaro Cárdenas welcomes Trotsky exiled in Mexico.
Spanish civil war begins.
- 1937 Bela Bartok's *Music for Strings, Percussion and Celesta*, premieres.
Aaron Copland's *Salon Mexico* premieres in Mexico under Carlos Chávez.
The Glenn Miller Band debuts in New York.
George Gershwin dies (b. 1898)

1900s Timeline (continued)

- 1939 World War II (1939-45). Einstein writes FDR about feasibility of atomic bomb.
Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) refuses to allow Marian Anderson to perform.
Gone with the Wind premieres.
Silvestre Revueltas dies (b. 1899).
- 1940 Hitler invades Norway, Denmark (April 9), the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg (May 10), and France (May 12).
Churchill becomes Britain's prime minister.
Trotsky assassinated in Mexico (Aug. 20).
First official network television broadcast is put out by NBC.
- 1942 Bing Crosby releases *White Christmas*, from the film *Holiday Inn*.
RCA Victor sprays gold over Glenn Miller's million-copy-seller *Chattanooga Choo Choo*, creating the first "gold record."
- 1945 Hitler commits suicide (April 30); Germany surrenders (May 7).
U.S. drops atomic bombs on Japanese cities of Hiroshima (Aug. 6) and Nagasaki (Aug. 9).
Benjamin Britten's *Peter Grimes* premieres in London.
First electronic computer, ENIAC, built.
- 1948 Manuel M. Ponce dies (b. 1882)
Gandhi assassinated in New Delhi by Hindu fanatic (Jan. 30).
Nation of Israel proclaimed; Independent Republic of Korea is proclaimed.
Tennessee Williams's *A Streetcar Named Desire* wins Pulitzer.

1900s Timeline (continued)

Columbia Records introduces the 33 1/3 LP (“long playing”) record allowing listeners to enjoy an unprecedented 25 minutes of music per side, compared to the four minutes per side of the standard 78 rpm record.

1951 Maria Grever dies (b. 1885)

Disc jockey Alan Freed uses the term rock 'n' roll to describe R&B in an effort to introduce rhythm and blues to a broader white audience, hesitant to embrace “black music.”

Elliott Carter composes his String Quartet No. 1 and becomes a leading avant-garde composer of the 20th century.

1954 Vietnam War (1954-1975).

First atomic submarine Nautilus launched (Jan. 21) U.S.

Supreme Court unanimously bans racial segregation in public schools (May 17). Dr. Jonas Salk starts inoculating children against polio.

1955 Rosa Parks refuses to sit at the back of the bus.

Martin Luther King, Jr., leads black boycott of Montgomery, Alabama, bus system (Dec. 1).

1957 Russians launch Sputnik I, first Earth-orbiting satellite (Space Age).

Leonard Bernstein completes *West Side Story*.

1959 Cuban President Batista resigns and flees—Fidel Castro takes over (Jan. 1).

Tibet's Dalai Lama escapes to India (Mar. 31).

Frank Sinatra wins his first Grammy Award for *Come Dance with Me*.

1960 John Coltrane forms his own quartet.

1900s Timeline (continued)

- 1961 U.S. breaks diplomatic relations with Cuba (Jan. 3).
Moscow announces putting first man in orbit around Earth, Maj. Yuri A. Gagarin (April 12).
Cuba invaded at Bay of Pigs by an estimated 1,200 anti-Castro exiles aided by U.S.; invasion crushed (April 17).
East Germans erect Berlin Wall between East and West Berlin to halt flood of refugees (Aug. 13).
- 1962 Pope John XXIII opens Second Vatican Council (Oct. 11)—Council holds four sessions, finally closing Dec. 8, 1965.
- 1963 Pope John XXIII dies (June 3)—succeeded June 21 by Paul VI.
Martin Luther King delivers “I have a dream” speech (Aug. 28).
President Kennedy shot and killed by sniper in Dallas, Tex.
A wave of Beatlemania hits the U.K. The Beatles.
- 1964 The Beatles appear on The Ed Sullivan Show. Cole Porter dies (b. 1891).
- 1965 Julián Carrillo dies (b. 1875)
- 1968 Ignacio Fernández Esperón "Tata Nacho" dies (b. 1894)
Martin Luther King Jr., is slain in Memphis (April 4)
- 1969 Stonewall riot in New York City marks beginning of gay rights movement.
Apollo 11 astronauts—Neil A. Armstrong, Edwin E. Aldrin, Jr., and Michael Collins—take man's first walk on moon (July 20).
Sesame Street debuts.
Woodstock Festival (Aug. 15–17). Internet (ARPA) goes online.

1900s Timeline (continued)

1970 Agustín Lara dies (b. 1897)

1972 President Nixon visits to Communist China.

1973 Duke Ellington's autobiography, *Music Is My Mistress*, is published.

1978 Carlos Chávez dies (b. 1899)

The World (1890-1950): Society and Economics

Early in the 19th century, when science was finding its way into the world as a profession; the world was saturated with influential discoveries, inventions and theories like the ones of Louis Pasteur, Thomas Alva Edison, Charles Darwin, among others. With the help of the Industrial Revolution, societies worldwide started moving in new directions. One of the most important events on this regard was the rising status of women in society, resulting in the separation between work and household. This separation increased during World War I when men left to serve their countries. These events encouraged the invention of new technologies and the emerging consumer society that had a direct effect on the world's economy.

According to a study by M. Shahid Alam, Professor of Economics at Northeastern University, during the 1800s there was centralized growth in the global economy that continued up to 1950. Thereafter, he saw a "decentralization" that lost its battle to the progress centralization once made since the early 1990s. Mr. Alam divided the history of capitalism in three phases. The first phase of "concentrated power" dates from 1800-1945, namely Britain, France, United States, and Germany.¹ The second phase dates from the late 1940s to early 1990s and the third phase started in the 1990s. It is important to note that the first phase contains the *Romantic Period* all the way up to the *Nationalist Period* in the field of the Fine Arts worldwide. By the end of the century, the world's

¹ "The new inorganic economy that developed after 1800 transcended the dual limits that constrained growth in the organic economy...More importantly, the energy from fossil fuels was converted to mechanical energy by machines: the steam engine and, later, internal combustion engine...This was in addition to the uses of fossil fuels, which began at an earlier date, in heating homes, lighting and smelting."

A Short History of the Global Economy Since 1800. M. Shahid Alam, Northeastern University, Boston. June 2003

society has seen the advances and development of many "firsts"; the first movie films; the first gramophone recordings; the first modern Olympic Games, etc.

The World (1890-1950): Music and Technology

While the Sonata form of the Classical Period grew into the Romanticism, the turn of the century saw the first radio broadcasting programs alongside the first recordings. As the Romanticism led the way to the Impressionism with Paris as the art capital, the 20th century brought the musical works in the hands of Claude Debussy, Scott Joplin and Giacomo Puccini while Chicago saw the birth of the Jazz during the 1920s. In the meantime, in America, the old Metropolitan opened its doors in 1883 and just eight years later, the Carnegie Hall followed. Why is this important? Because these two halls brought artists from all over the world and in no small part, dictated the musical life of the American continent. Among the many international artists that performed at Carnegie Hall, I want to point out some of the Mexican artists, popular and classic, that performed there like Manuel M. Ponce and Tito Guízar (1908-1999); as well as the Orquesta Típica de Mexico under the direction of Miguel Lerdo de Tejada.² The Italian conductor Carlos Curti (1859-1926) founded the Orquesta Típica, still in existence, on August 1st, 1884.³ In the article *¿Quién fue Carlos Curti?* published in 2009 by Curtis' scholar and librarian Jean Dickson, we learn that young Curti migrated to New York with his elder brother Giovanni. Carlos played xylophone, violin and mandolin and Giovanni played the harp. On January 2nd, 1880 arrived to New York from Spain group named "The Spanish Students;"⁴ who had had succesful presentations two years before at the Paris Exposition

² Zaraboso, Raúl. "Recordando a Daniel Zarabozo." Raúl Zaraboso, 1 June 1994.

³ "Orquesta Típica De La Ciudad De México." *Secretaría De Cultura De La Ciudad De México*. Gobierno De México, 1 Jan. 2000.

⁴ The New York Times, Jan. 2, 1880

gaining rapidly international reputation; they accompanied themselves with five guitars of fourteen and sixteen strings, nine mandolins of twelve strings, and a violin and were dressed in Spanish costumes. Carlos Curti saw the opportunity and with his musical knowledge and impresario skills, created "The Original Spanish Students" that he had to rename later to "The Roman Students."⁵ He and his brother moved to Mexico in 1883 where they worked as music teachers at the conservatory and it is easy to see where the idea of creating a Mexican Typic Orchestra came from. President Porfirio Díaz was present at the orchestra's inaugural concert and was so pleased with their performance that he sent them on their first international performance at the World's Industrial and Cotton Exposition of 1885 in New Orleans. Since then, the Orquesta Típica has been supported by the Mexican government attaching the orchestra to intense episodes like the assassination of elected Mexican President Alvaro Obregón.⁶ The Orquesta Típica is the predecessor of the Mariachi bands and is the same orchestra that Tata Nacho conducted from 1960-1968.

At Carnegie Concert Hall there were also several artists that performed the songs of Maria Grever. This is relevant because it elevated Grever to the stature of renowned composer by the time she started introducing her songs through the XEW radio station in Mexico, which started transmissions in 1930, and to the rest of Latin America. The introduction of the radio became a very important trend that classical and popular composers and musicians followed to convey their art to wider audiences. Other

⁵ Carlo Curti added the "s" to the end of his first name to be read as Spanish when he formed the group "The Original Spanish Students"

⁶ Alfonso Esparza Oteo was conducting the orchestra playing Obregón's favorite song "El Limoncito" at the restaurant "La Bombilla" when Obregón was assassinated by three gunshots on July 17th, 1928. Carmona, Doralicia. "Álvaro Obregón Salido (1880-1928)." *Memoria Política De México*. Instituto Nacional De Estudios Políticos A.C., 19 Feb. 2000. Web. 17 Aug. 2014.

important inventions of the time that pushed the boundaries of music, as mentioned before, were the press and the audio recordings.

Chapter Two: Mexico before and after the Revolution

Mexico before the Revolution: Cultural Scene

The rich cultural history of Mexico is quite extensive. Oversimplifying, it can be divided in three parts: Before, during and after Spain's conquest. *The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music* divides Mexican music into four periods: pre-Encounter era (before 1521), Colonial Period (1521-1810), Independence Period (1810-1910), and the 20th century (after 1910). This division will be used to keep the unity of this work and to look briefly into the cultural scene of Mexico before and after the revolution.

The pre-Encounter Era attested to the cultural history of the ancient civilizations like the Aztecs in the center of Mexico, the Mayas in the Yucatán peninsula, the Olmecs to the east, Zapotecs and Mixtecs to the south, Tarascs to the west, among many other indigenous tribes, some of which are still alive.

After the colonization of the Americas, the colonists exerted a strong impact, not only in the politics and religion practices, but also in society and culture. Nevertheless, the most important social incident presented at this time was the *mestizaje*.⁷ The *mestizaje* is the blend of European and Indigenous races. This mixture of races accelerated in 1521 with the defeat of Cuauhtémoc, the last Aztec emperor.⁸ It is of special importance because the *mestizaje* results in the inevitable fusion of cultures that pushed the incorporation of European customs more rapidly throughout the territory; it also inserted another layer in the social class system of the New Spain:

⁷ The African heritage has also been present in Mexico since the Conquest, although a minority, they influenced with their culture and customs regions of the states of Veracruz, Tabasco, Michoacán, Jalisco, Oaxaca and Guerrero. By the end of the Colonial Period, 40% of the population was considered mestizo population and 10% of it was Afro-mestizo. See *The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music* p. 184

⁸ Hernán Cortes defeated Cuauhtémoc at the Battle of Tenochtitlán, which is now Mexico City.

1. The Indians or natives being the lowest social class.
2. Mestizos.
3. Criollo (Creole), descendant of Spaniards parents born in New Spain.
4. Spaniards, born in Spain living temporarily or permanently in New Spain.

The works of María Grever, Tata Nacho and Agustín Lara belong to the class of the mestizo. Grever is the daughter of a Spaniard father and a Mexican mother. I do not know the nationality of Agustín Lara's and Tata Nacho's parents, but based on the information gathered in my research, it is assumed that both composers are of mestizo ancestry. In the case of María Grever, who lived most of her productive career in New York City, her works were known in the USA. While she was alive, her music survived in Mexico and the rest of Latin America, and for that reason, she was considered a Mexican composer, and not, an American composer.

Stevenson rightfully calls the Colonial Period "the transplanting of European culture". Important tools in this transplanting of European culture were the conversion process to Catholicism and the establishment of the first printing press in Latin America founded in Mexico City in 1539.⁹ The Indians learned to read and write in the manner of the Spaniards, as well as to play occidental instruments.¹⁰ Throughout this period, the cultivation of fine arts flourished in Mexico and the New World. One clear example was Ortiz, a soldier of Hernán Cortés, who founded the first school of dance in Mexico City in 1525, where he taught Spanish dances to the Indians.¹¹

⁹ The press published many religious works.

¹⁰ Called "occidental instruments" from the point of view of Europe and Asia (Occident vs. Eastern), not because of the obvious relation between Europe and Latin America.

¹¹ The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music p. 181, Latin American Music: Past and Present p. 22, Music in Mexico p. 93

During the last decade of the 18th century, throughout the Independence Period (1810-1910), Mexico imported pianofortes and European dances came into fashion in this society gaining immense popularity. Socially, this became a problem for the religious leaders who saw the rise of the vernacular culture and the decline of the church as a powerful presence. The religion, Catholicism for the majority, was an entity that continued to dictate much of society's demeanor in Mexico to this day. This powerful presence was well documented since the Conquest; we find legislations prohibiting the dancing of the "offensive" *sarabande* in 1583.¹² In 1815, the popularity of the *Waltz* in Mexico spread widely and was denounced by an ecclesiastical official as follows:

A corrupt importation from degenerate France...All of man's depravity could not invent anything more pernicious, nay, not even Hell itself could spawn a monster more obscene. Only those who have seen the *Vals* [waltz] danced with complete license are in a position to warn of its perils.¹³

The waltz, as well as other European dances like the mazurkas, polkas and schottisches, were played at the salons of the aristocracy, combined with the traditional Mexican melodies called *aires nacionales* (national airs) and promoted the beginning for the search of a nationalism that would not flourish until after the Revolution of 1910.

¹² Music in Mexico p. 95

¹³ Music of Latin America p. 220

Mexico before the Revolution: Music

"Music in this country is a sixth sense"

Frances Calderón de la Barca¹⁴

Following *The Garland Handbook of Latin American Music*, divisions for the musical periods in Mexico included the pre-Encounter Era (before 1521); Colonial Period (1521-1810); Independence Period (1810-1910); and the 20th century (after 1910). We will look briefly into the last three periods, because it is where the *canciones* of Grever, Tata Nacho and Lara have the most relevant roots, the development and golden era.

Colonial Period (1521-1810)

These years, in which the mestizo music developed in a relatively short time, were of European control in Latin America, mainly by Spain and Portugal. Seventeen years after the establishment of the first press in Mexico, we find the first book with musical notation in Mexico City: an Ordinary of the Mass (1556),¹⁵ and the establishment of the first music school as early as 1523,¹⁶ by the Flemish Franciscan Fray Pedro de Gante (1480-1572). By 1575, in Mexico there were twenty-five large music schools and many small ones.¹⁷ Since the Amerindians were very apt to learn music, this helped the missionaries who taught them music, making the "transplant of culture" easier alongside the process of conversion to Catholicism. Stevenson shared the following letter from Fray Alonso de Paraleja written in Guadalajara on 1569 to illustrate, "Music is taught to all

¹⁴ Life in Mexico During a Residence of Two Years in that Country pg. 295

¹⁵ For a detailed account of books printed in Mexico during this era see *Music in Mexico* p. 68

¹⁶ *Music of Latin America* p. 219

¹⁷ *Music in Latin America* p. 7

those who wish to learn it, and because most Indians have a natural flair for it, many become skillful singers and players.”¹⁸

During this time, there were introduced new instruments into Mexican territory. Ortiz, the founder of the School of Dance, was a professional *vihuela* player.¹⁹ Perhaps, the most important legacy of colonial music is by the Mexican composer and organist Manuel de Zumaya (c. 1678-1755); he composed the first opera in the Western hemisphere: *Parténope* (1711).

Independence Period (1810-1910)

The hundred years following the independence from Spain shows the country's effort to find an identity as a nation. This period is also called *Porfiriato*, a time when most of the arts were European imitations.²⁰ The salon music imitated the styles of Italy, France and Germany; moreover, it corresponded to the height of the 19th century Italian opera form that Mexico embraced. In 1827, Mexico received the visit of the famous Spanish singer and voice teacher Manuel García (1805-1906); and in 1836, the Italian Lauro Rossi conducted in Mexico City the operas *La Sonnambula*, *Cenerentola* and *Il Pirata*.²¹ Shortly after that, Mexico produced its first international opera singer: Angela Peralta (1845-1883); she was known around the world as the "Mexican Nightingale", as well as a composer, an accomplished pianist, and harpist. She sang for the Emperor Maximilian in the Mexican premiere of *Ildegonda* (1866); the second opera of Mexican

¹⁸ *Music in Mexico* p. 60

¹⁹ Musical instrument predecessor of the guitar, closely related to the lute, it flourished mainly in Spain and in areas under Spanish influence in the 15th and 16th centuries. It was also known in Italy and Portugal under the name *viola*. Oxford Music Online

²⁰ This is the term given to the almost three decades of dictatorship of Mexican President Porfirio Díaz.

²¹ Lauro Rossi was director of the Milan Conservatory (1850-1871) and Naples Conservatory (1871-1878).

composer Melesio Morales (1838-1908) to a libretto of the Italian Temistocle Solera.²²

Melesio Morales had received musical preparation in France and Italy and was one of the founders of The Conservatory of Music in Mexico City (1866) that nourished the musical education of young Mexican musicians, including numerous female pianists.²³ The musical life of Mexico and especially the representation of operas increased during the post-independence times. Eighty-six traveling opera companies visited Mexico; most came from Italy. Opera companies from France, Spain, England and USA were also present. These companies presented the most current works of Verdi, Rossini, Bellini, Donizetti, etc. An extensive list of famous opera singers that visited or toured Mexico included the Spaniard Adelina Patti, the Italians Enrico Caruso and Giuseppe Di Stefano, and the American-born Greek soprano, Maria Callas.

²² Temistocle Solera (1800-1900) was the librettist for Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*.

²³ "One of its first products [of The Conservatory of Music] was Carlos J. Meneses (1865-1929), who became one of Mexico's best pianists, orchestra conductors, and teachers of the time. He was to produce a host of women pianists and was partly responsible for Mexico's continuing piano cult." Pulido, Esperanza. *Mexican Women in Music* Revista de Música Latinoamericana, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Spring - Summer, 1983), p. 123

Mexico after the Revolution: Cultural Scene

During the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Mexico entered a stage of deep transition and transformation. Many countries cut relationships with Mexico, among them, and perhaps the most vital, the United States. The two countries have a long story of territorial battles and during the Mexican Revolution, the diplomatic relations between them worsened and turned even more difficult, complicated and unfavorable for most Mexicans living or visiting the United States. Mexican leader Pancho Villa invaded Columbus, New Mexico in 1916 followed by the failed attempt to capture the Mexican rebel by United States General John Joseph Pershing. As noted by Christina Taylor Gibson, this not only affected the less known artists like Grever, but also renowned composers like Manuel M. Ponce, who performed at the Aeolian Hall in New York City two weeks after Villa's invasion, to a cold reception and negative reviews.²⁴

After the Revolution, and with the expulsion of the Spaniards, Mexicans had the urge to redefine the sense of *being Mexican*. It was an unavoidable struggle for a society that found echoes of "Mexicanism" in the indigenous races in an effort to find an identity. As a result, everything and anything that had a relation with indigenous traditions were seen as "true Mexican"; on the contrary, anything that had residues of Spain was repelled systematically and turned into a symbol of oppression. This repudiation was clear when one observed the comments by Otto Mayer-Serra made to Francisco Curt Lange -a German settled in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1923- regarding the formation of an Inter-

²⁴ *The Music of Manuel M. Ponce, Julián Carrillo, and Carlos Chávez in New York, 1925-1932*. Gibson, Christina Taylor.

American Cooperative of Composers: “We thought that the time when a musician had to labor exclusively *ad maiorem Dei gloriam* was definitely past.”²⁵

As a result of this repudiation, an exhibition of modernist and avant-gardist ideas took place in Mexico with movements like the Aztec Renaissance in New York by the hands of the famous muralists, Diego Rivera and Alfaro Siqueiros; and musicians such as Silvestre Revueltas, Julián Carrillo and Carlos Chávez, Jose Pablo Moncayo, among many others.

²⁵ Music of Latin America, p. 13

Mexico after the Revolution: Music

"We want to feel the rhythm of the land that inspired Maria Grever, its daughter, to write the rollicking "Tipi Tipi Tin" so recently popular up here."

The Other Americans (1943)

After the revolution, music came to an abrupt halt for a few years. The previous Mexican musical works became forgotten, including Melesio Morales' celebrated opera *Ildegonda* because those were works that represented the *Porfiriato* times.²⁶

Nevertheless, music became the most important way to define "being Mexican." Mark Brill fairly points out that, "a crucial element of the country's [Mexico] nationalism" is "found most profoundly in its music." [Brill p. 71]

The transformation into modernity of the country took place over a decade following the Revolution. The great philosopher of the Nation and Secretary of Public Education José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), made a call for national identity; Manuel M. Ponce responded with a lecture entitled, "La Música y la canción Mexicana" in 1913. In his lecture Ponce called the *canción* "the soul of the people,"²⁷ and even though his calling was for large-scale compositions like concertos, string quartets, etc., his words made a musical division between two groups, the "classical" composers and the "popular" composers that were inspired to write *canciones*. It is important to point out that the words "classical" and "popular" must refer to the type of music the composer decided to make; by no means it represents the composer's academic knowledge or

²⁶ It was not until 1994 that *Ildegonda* was revived in Mexico City and twelve years later in 2007 the opera was represented at the Teatro Degollado in Guadalajara receiving great acclaim once again. In both occasions, the opera had been performed only two days. It has been recently performed again in Mexico City this present year.

²⁷ The lecturers included Luis G. Urbina (Poet), teacher Antonio Caso (teacher) and Pedro Henríquez Ureña (Historian), members of the *Ateneo de la Juventud*, formed in opposition to Porfirio Díaz's. *The Music of Manuel M. Ponce, Julián Carrillo, and Carlos Chávez in New York, 1925-1932*. Gibson, Christina Taylor.

musical preparation. Just to give one clear example, Consuelo Velázquez, the composer of the famous bolero "Bésame Mucho", was a conservatory-trained pianist.

The new musical trends were developed by what Mayer-Sierra described as a blend of *indigenismo modernista* with *realismo mestizo* in the hands of Chávez and Revueltas, while the avant-garde ideas took place in the works of Mexican composer Julian Carrillo (1875-1965) and his *Sonido 13*.

As Mexico started to leave behind the revolution and its impact in society, the developments in telecommunications started to make inroads. The *Dirección General de Telégrafos*, Mexico's telegraph company government owned, made the first radio transmission on September 27, 1921. To these gubernatorial transmissions, were added news, conferences and concerts broadcasting as well as musical programs with composers like Manuel M. Ponce and Tata Nacho. Humberto Domínguez Chávez, a professor of communication at the UNAM describes the first commercial radio transmission as follows:

The first commercial radio transmission in the Country [Mexico] was done on May 8th, 1923 by the magazine *El Universal Ilustrado* and *La Casa del Radio*, in the CYL radio station...the radio broadcast combined the popular and avant-garde modernity...Andrés Segovia played Frédéric Chopin; Manuel M. Ponce, played at the piano his waltz *Estrellita*, the popular singer Celia Montalván and Manuel Maples Arce, who read his poem T. S. H., a text that had been published in the pages of *El Universal Ilustrado* few days before...it became in history, the first reading of poetry over the radio in Mexico. On the other hand, the CROM radio station

offered sporadic concerts dedicated to the working class. By 1927, the radio station *CZI de la Secretaría de la Industria, Comercio y Trabajo*, broadcasted each Friday musical programs generally. For instance, on June 8th, 1928, among the pieces presented were: *Cabecita loca*, by Aguilar y Palma with the *Trío Rey's*; *Canción veneciana*, sung by the baritone Alejandro Hernández Tamez; *Menudita*, by and with *Tata Nacho* and the *Trío Rey's*; *Mi chiamano Mimi...* from *La Bohème* by Giacomo Puccini, interpreted by Stella Rossi; *Ya va callendo...* by *Tata Nacho* and the *Trío Rey's*; *iAy mi alma, ya te juites...* (corrido) by M. Barajas and the *Trío Rey's*.

By 1930, the XEW radio station, owned by Emilio Azcárraga Vidaurreta, was established; this station started transmissions with 5,000 watts, allowing it to be licensed internationally. It was known by the name of *La Voz de América Latina desde México* (America Latina's voice from Mexico). The station hosted programs that made the careers of many musicians of the time, including *Tata Nacho*, *María Grever* and *Agustín Lara*. *Agustín Lara* became the announcer of *La Hora del Aficionado (The Amateur Hour)*, *La Hora Azul (The Blue Hour)*, *La Hora Íntima de Agustín Lara* and *Tata Nacho* was the announcer of *Así Es Mi Tierra (This is the Way MyLland is)*.

Chapter Three: Canciones

What is the Canción?

Canción is the equivalent Spanish word for its English counterpart: *Song*. The Mexican Canción dates as far back as the mestizo music that developed shortly after the Conquest of Spanish Colonizers. Therefore, the *canción* has European (mainly Spain) and Amerindian roots as well as Nortemericana, namely New York by way of Tin Pan Alley as we will discuss below.

In the book, *Music in Mexico*, written in 1952, American Musicologist Robert Stevenson, expressed discontent with the "commercial" music, whose only topic is "love, kisses, the moon above, flowers, and love again." Stevenson affirmed that this "ephemeral" music "deserves at least passing attention." On his behalf, *Music in Mexico* is a historical survey directed towards the early Mexican composers like Hernando Franco and Antonio Salazar, and goes all the way up to the 20th century composers of which he includes: Julián Carrillo, Manuel M. Ponce, Carlos Chávez and, Silvestre Revueltas, among others.²⁸ In 1945, Russian-born American Nicolas Slonimsky observed that in the United States of America there was, and still remains, a popular notion and a misconception that all Latin American popular music consists of Tangos and Rumbas. This, among many other misconceptions that generally surround the realm of popular music, have been somewhat clarified by other scholars, but still ignored by others. Those who have done research in Mexican Popular Music like Claes and Gaijerstam,²⁹ identify that the *canción* contains elements of bel canto and romantic texts

²⁸ Mexico won its Independence in 1810; the turmoil of the Revolution (1910) was still very present by 1952. President Miguel Alemán (1946-1952) had just granted women the right to vote in municipal elections and President Adolfo Ruiz Cortines (1952-1958) granted women the right to vote in presidential elections.

²⁹ *Popular Music in Mexico* (1976)

and that they were prominently used by classically educated composers in Mexico City, contrary to what many music scholars still assume was a handful of untrained composers.³⁰ It is true that the construction of these pieces is made out of simple forms and harmonies, as Mr. Stevenson points out; but the role of these pieces in historical perspective is much more complex than the simplicity of the tonic-dominant relationship.

Before going any further, we need to analyze the kind of influence that was exerted in the Mexican composers by the different entities mentioned before. Within the cultural context of Mexico we need first to define: *Canción* and *Popular Music*. According to *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* in its entry on México, the term *canción* is defined as a "musical form not intended to be danced, with a romantic text that makes considerable use of rubato." The article also denotes the Caribbean connection of this genre and its distinctive rhythms as well as the connections with the Colombian *bambuco* and the *habanera* of the early 19th century Havana, Cuba. This definition conflicts with Mr. Stevenson's initial statement, which falls short at trying to define the *canción* by ignoring its basic constitution.

The *Encyclopedia of Latin American Popular Music* defines *Popular Music* as "music of the post-industrial age," meaning the music disseminated by the technology available at the time such as the radio, early recordings and printed music. The *Encyclopedia of Latin American Popular Music* also states that Popular Music "shares distinct characteristics different from that of the art and folk music systems." Therefore, the term "popular music" refers to the function of the music in the society. It does not reflect the complexities of the musical language or the composer's academic knowledge.

³⁰ The Music Of Manuel M. Ponce, Julián Carrillo, And Carlos Chávez In New York, 1925-1932. Christina Taylor Gibson, Doctor of Philosophy, 2008

There has been a lack of recent scholarly studies dealing with the *Canción* form and its major representatives. In Mexico, and other Latin American countries, the songs are so well known that they are popular knowledge, in part, because of the nature of the *Canción*; but there has also been especulation about the composer's lack of musical preparation or assumptions that they only wrote "folk music" for the broad populace. Nothing could be more innacurate and far from the truth. In reality, María Grever, Tata Nacho and Agustín Lara wrote popular music after the models of the Spaniards and the Italians, with special mention of the Neapolitans, and with the exception of Agustín Lara, who had less classical training. The composers reveal a rather extensive training in their study of music.

The *Canción* forms part of the cultural history of Mexico and is the antecessor of other musical genres. It is the direct result of many generations and cultures that became one. The *Encyclopedia of Latin American Popular Music* notices that Mexican music "is a combination of traits from different musical traditions." Without a doubt, the musical heritage of Mexico is extremely vast and it is more than just love songs, mariachi music, corridos, or its dreaded little brother, the "narco-corrido."³¹

These melded traits correspond to the Spanish colonists and the European immigrants (besides Spain: Italy, France and Germany) and Mexico's early civilizations, including not only Aztecs and Mayans, but civilizations from other regions of the Mexican territory: Olmecs, Otomís, Purépechas (Tarascs), Toltecs, Zapotecs, Mixtecs, etc. This mixture created a wide diversity of musical genres. For instance, Mark Brill in his book *Music in Latin America and the Caribbean* dedicates a whole chapter to Mexico

³¹ Narco-corrido is a dreaded musical genre generally played by Banda ensembles. Its most important trait is the lyrics that describe lives or events related to the drug cartels present in Mexico, portraying the Drug Lords as heroes. This musical genre is a direct descendant from the corridos of the Mexican Revolution.

(Chapter 3) scratching the surface of the music history. This book offers a quick guide with listening suggestions and, among other things, divides Mexican music into smaller sections; starting with Maya and Aztec cultures, Colonial Period, Mexican Independence, Folk music, Regional Traditions, the borderland region, etc. Moreover, each section is divided into different genres such as: *Canción*, Son Jarocho, Huapango, Danzón, Bolero, Ranchera, Corrido, Norteña, Banda, Tropical, Pop and Trova, etc.

As mentioned earlier, the *canción* is a lyrical composition with sentimental lyrics; it is sometimes called *Canción Romántica* (Romantic Song). Juan S. Garrido describes it as "a mixture of Spanish influence." Geijerstam gives a more detailed description dividing the *Canción* into two categories: Those in Spanish Folk style, and "canciones in *bel canto* style, which were sung in the salons of the aristocracy and the middle class;" Andrew Farach-Colton adds: "many of the songs have roots close to an operatic source..." the journalist notices "a kinship with the slightly older repertory of Neapolitan songs such as "O Sole mio" or "Torna a Surriento."

The "ephemeral" popular songs have remained in the repertoire since their conception and they have been compared to the equivalent songs of Berlin, Gershwin, and Porter, among others.³² This comparison is not a coincidence either; the American Popular composers such as George Gershwin, Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, and Richard Rodgers were contemporaries to María Grever, Tata Nacho and Agustín Lara. Lets also remember that María Grever collaborated with some of them and if we believe that Tata Nacho was roommate of George Gershwin, we can assume that there was a fusion of ideas with American composers. Indeed, the *canción* is also associated with

³² "These songs have a place in Latin Culture equivalent to those of Irving Berlin, George Gershwin, Cole Porter, among many others of the so-called 'American Song-book' in the United States." Andrew Farach-Colton.

the *32-bar song form* or *American Popular Ballad Form* of Tin Pan Alley as we will now see.

The *32-bar song form* has been used by the hundreds in a wide range of genres like jazz standards, ballads, country songs, popular music and Broadway tunes; and it was much cultivated at the beginning of the 20th Century.³³ The main exponents of the form are Irving Berling, Cole Porter, Jerome Kern, Richard Rodgers and George Gershwin. The *32-bar song form* is a ternary form characterized by a "verse" and "chorus" with an introduction usually leading to the main melody, typically an AABA form, each section made of eight bars phrases and, when repeated, the A section is normally set to a different text.³⁴ But how does this connect with the *canciones* in particular? In my study of the music of the songs of María Grever, Tata Nacho and Agustín Lara, I was able to find the elements I have described before. These three Mexican composers are the main representatives of the popular music in Mexico without a doubt. They incorporated in their songs the texts and musical forms all their cultural heritage and made a form of their own, a form that I describe as the *Mexican Model*.

³³ Mathes, James. *The Analysis of Musical Form*. Upper Saddle River, N.J: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2007. Print.

³⁴ Santa, Matthew. *Hearing Form: Musical Analysis with and without the Score*. New York: Routledge, 2010. Print.

Canciones: Júrame and the Mexican Model

Title: *Júrame*

Year of composition: 1926

Composer: María Grever (1885-1951)

Mexican composers utilized what I describe as the "*Mexican Model*." This particular musical model is a regular binary form characterized by a clear division of the minor and major modes. The model has its roots on the Neapolitan songs cultivated at the beginning of the 20th century and can be found in the works of Paolo Tosti, Ernesto de Curtis, Salvatore Cardillo, Buzzi-Peccia, among many others. One main difference between the Neapolitan songs and its Mexican counterpart is that the Italians tend to fluctuate between the major and minor modes throughout the composition. The *Mexican Model* normally starts in the relative minor mode, leaving the major key for the refrain. This type of *canción* has an overly nostalgic text, during the minor key section, the text normally reminisces with past events while the major key section is always a reflection or wishful remembrance; always romantic and, at times, regretful.

Songs of this kind tend to be constructed by symmetrical phrases; regularly two 8bar periods built by two 4bar phrases. I choose the Neapolitan song, "Torna a Surriento" because of its similar construction with "Júrame."

1. Both of them have the same number of measures (44).
2. Their introduction is 4bars taken from the refrain and two bars in the tonic before the singing takes place.

3. "Júrame's" phrasing is exactly the same as "Torna a Surriento," that is, eighth-bar phrases. The only difference is that the text in "Júrame" is longer; therefore, there is an added 8-bar period. (m.15-22).
4. The key change from minor to major takes place in both pieces, although in a different manner. The refrain in "Júrame" is clearly marked by the key change to C major (m.23); however, the refrain in "Torna a Surriento" starts 8 measures later (m.26) and the key change takes place earlier (m.17). In "Torna a Surriento," the composer fluctuates the melody between the major and minor modes indistinctly; in fact, the song ends in the minor key.

Title: *Despedida*

Year of composition: 1946

Composer: María Grever (1885-1951)

"Despedida" is one of Grever's late compositions, and the youngest in this analysis. It is 56 measures long in the key of Dm. The song tells the story of a couple breaking up and the person's realization that, although the love is still there, their separation is inevitable. The use of minor second intervals and diminished chords suggest the lover's pain. The key change to major arrives precisely over the phrase: "*Vuelve otra vez a mi lado...*" (Come back again by my side...), the climax of the piece. The song ends rapidly followed by the phrase, "*Di que no haz olvidado el amor que te dí*" (Tell me that you have not forgotten the love I have given to you).

In the piano accompaniment, the rhythms are juxtaposed 3:2 enhancing the "separation motive" underlying also the sense of instability.

Title: *La Borrachita*

Year of composition: 1917

Composer: Tata Nacho (1894 - 1968)

The relevance of "*La borrachita*" goes beyond the fact of having been performed for over 100 years. It is a window to the past, a clear picture of the society at the turn of the 20th century. In an interview made to Tata Nacho in Mexico City in May of 1937, the composer recalled that while he was living in New York, he received a letter from his mother. She wrote that two of his songs had become very popular and had been published without his consent: "La Borrachita" and "Adiós mi Chaparrita." In the interview, Tata Nacho said that he composed both songs at the studio of painter Ignacio Rosas in Mexico City, around 1917. This was a familiar place where many artists of the time gathered sharing friendship, poetry, new compositions and drinks. It was during one of these bohemian gatherings, that he met the young model, "Lupita." She had been asked via telegram by her father to return to her hometown and the occasion at the studio that day was her "farewell party". Tata Nacho went to the piano and started improvising "Borrachita me voy, para olvidarte..." (For I'm a tad drunk, I am leaving to forget about you...) making reference to the inebriated state in which not only Lupita, but the rest of the company were at that point in time.

This account differs from an interview made by exiled Spanish Journalist Eulalio Ferrer Rodríguez (1921-2009), producer of the XEW radio program, "Así es mi tierra, 1930" (This is the way my land is), where Tata Nacho was the announcer. Ferrer asked the composer if "La Borrachita" was the result of a bohemian gathering. Tata Nacho

replied that he had been working on the lyrics for some months but the music "came up at another bohemian corner several years ago..."³⁵

"La Borrachita" was published in 1923 as a "popular dance" and the melody was underlined with a habanera rhythm. This is the exact same habanera rhythm of the famous aria from the opera, *Carmen*, by French composer G. Bizet (1838 - 1875). Bizet thought it to be a folk Cuban melody, but without knowing, he had duplicated the famous melody from a song called, "El Arreglito" (The Little Arrangement/Agreement) by the Spanish composer Sebastián Iradier (1809 - 1865). Another clear example of this trend is an earlier composition by Iradier, the very well known song: "La Paloma" (Madrid, 1859, Paris 1864). The habanera style soon became very fashionable throughout Europe and the Americas. In 1850, Iradier travelled to Paris, where he met personalities like Rossini and Paulina García-Viardot; in 1857, he traveled to America accompanying a young Adelina Patti as her conductor, pianist and guitarist visiting the United States, Mexico and Cuba.

Other songs with the habanera rhythm are "Tengo Nostalgia de Ti", by Tata Nacho or "O sole Mio" by the Italian E. Di Capua. As you can see, the habanera is a very significant component in the growth of later genres including, not only the *canción*, but also the *danzón*, *bolero*, *milonga*, *jazz* and *tango*, just to mention some of the most immediate genres. Iradier, in fact, was the first composer to explode this characteristic Cuban rhythm, but Argentinian musicologist, Carlos Vega (1898-1966) traces its origins as far back as the English contradance that was later absorbed in Spain as contradanza or danza. He claims that around 1825, it was transformed into the habanera with added

³⁵ "...es una letra a la que estuve dando vueltas durante algunos meses..." "Cuando la redondeé, la música surgió en otro rincón bohemio de hace bastantes años..."

Afro-Cuban rhythms. Recalling Stevenson, this is where the "rhythmic elements intermesh."

Title: *Intima*

Year of composition: 1941

Composer: Tata Nacho (1894 - 1968)

"Íntima" is a different case, published as *canCIÓN*, the composition of this piece is a little gem. Written in the traditional binary form originally in Db major and in 6/8 time. The chord progression throughout the piece makes use of augmented and diminished chords by using the 5th of the chord as a false leading tone. Along with the chord progressions, Tata Nacho uses a tonic pedal note while the accompaniment is made of eighth note patterns throughout leaving the use of the long notes for the expression of the melody and text: "*Tuyo, muy tuyo*" and "*mía, muy mía*" (Yours, very yours...mine, very mine). The climax comes towards the end of the piece with the words: "*de nadie más!*" ([You belong] to no one else). The lyrics belong to the poet, Ricardo López Méndez (1903-1989) from Yucatán.

Chapter Four: The Composers

María Grever (1885 - 1951)

"I pray often. I keep my prayer book by my bed. I pray for my loved ones in Spain, for my kinsmen in Mexico and I prayed for my song."

The Hit of the Year is Ti-pi-tin

James Street, *Radio Guide* Vol. 7 no 31, May 21, 1938

María Grever was a pioneer of 20th century popular music. She became the first Mexican woman to gain international fame as a composer, gaining popularity in Mexico, the United States of America, Latin America and Europe. At the time of her musical output, some of the best-known composers included: George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, Irving Berlin and Cole Porter in the USA; Mario Talavera, Agustín Lara, Alfonso Esparza Oteo, Tata Nacho in Mexico; and the famous tango composer Carlos Gardel in Argentina, to name a few.

The book, *Notable Hispanic American Women*, lists María Grever among eight other prominent Mexican women of her time; she is the only "composer" and "singer."³⁶ This entry confirms the lack of scholarly research on her work. Since then, new research has been done. Two books that have studied her opus are *María Grever: Poeta Y Compositora* (1994), by María Luisa Rodríguez Lee; and *María Grever: Reflexiones Sobre Su Obra* (2009), by singer and composer, Nayeli Nesme.

³⁶ María Gertrudes Barcelo (1800-1852) Entrepreneur; Concha Maria de Concepción Argüello (1791-1857) Pioneer, Nun; Dolores del Río (1905-1983) Actress; Consuelo González Amezcua (1903-1975) Artist, Writer; Maria Latigo Hernández (1893?-1986) Civil Rights Activist, Community leader; Luisa Moreno (1907-1990?) Civil Rights Activist; Sara Estela Ramírez (1881-1910) Revolutionary, Poet, Feminist; Teresa Urrea (1873-1906) Curandera, Mystic.

Grever claimed in an interview in 1938 in Ohio, to have written her first work - now lost- "A Christmas Carol" at age four.³⁷ She was born María Joaquina de la Portilla Torres on September 14, 1885.³⁸ She was the daughter of an immigrant Spanish father, Francisco de la Portilla and a Mexican mother, Julia Torres Palomar. They registered their newborn in León, Guanajuato, the only city that had a hospital at the time. The hospital was also close to their Hacienda San Juan de los Otates located in the town of Lagos de Moreno, Jalisco. This is where María Joaquina lived her first three years of life.

In 1888, the family moved to Spain, where her father owned a house in Madrid and the Hacienda de Torrijos in Seville. The family used to travel to Paris and London for shopping and it is during this period that she learned English, Spanish, French and Italian and studied with Claude Debussy (1862-1918). My belief is that she was a piano student rather than composition student; this makes more sense according to the years María Joaquina spent in Spain and the "shopping" traveling. Other motives to consider is the possibility that her compositions do not reveal Debussy's style, but rather the lyrical style of the Italian and Spanish melodies, and also, her first breakthrough as a composer did not come until she returned to Mexico.

Other sources affirm that she studied with a person named Franz Lenhard, who may not even have existed to the extent of my knowledge. It is possible they are referring to the Austro-Hungarian composer of many operettas, Franz Lehár (1870-1948). Although he is María Joaquina's contemporary, there is no evidence that he had taught composition in Paris, Madrid or Seville, cities that the young De la Portilla frequented.

³⁷ Rodriguez Lee p. 16

³⁸ Many sources cite Aug. 16th, 1894, incorrectly. Her birth certificate reads Sep. 14th, 1885.

The only reliable reference that makes mention of Franz Lehár is a short biography written by Robert Stevenson in *The Norton Grove dictionary of women composers* (1994); however, he states that Grever herself, claimed to have "*received musical advice*" from Lehár.³⁹

At her father's passing, the family moved back to Mexico relocating in Mexico City in 1900. The young composer was then 15 years old, and studied singing with her maternal aunt, Cuca Torres. Three years later María would compose her first successful song, "A Una Ola" or "To a Wave" --also known in English under the title "Billow, under the moonlight gleaming".

In 1907, the young De la Portilla (at 22 years old) married Leon A. Grever, an American oil company executive; the newlyweds lived some years in Xalapa, Veracruz and Mexico City until 1916 when the family fled in the midst of the Mexican Revolution. In 1917, she arrived with her daughter Carmen and her son Carlos by sea to New York City where she lived for the rest of her life; her husband Leon Grever, followed her to New York a few months later.

Since her arrival to New York City in 1917 and for the next 20 years, María Grever worked hard to build up a reputation in the musical scene of that city. In her attempts to make a way in the musical scene, Maria Grever presented herself as a Spanish singer and composer, even though she was already a United States citizen. She identified herself as a Spanish singer in the first articles in the New York Times. Her decision to conceal her American citizenship was a smart decision, given the circumstances of being a woman in the music business at the time, and, being Mexican. Once she was established as a musician, she openly acknowledged her Mexican heritage and was proud of it. She

³⁹ The Norton Grove dictionary of women composers pg. 197

appeared in recitals featuring her compositions and collaborated in the movie industry starting in the late 1920s, working for Paramount Pictures and 20th Century Fox studios as a film composer, where she collaborated musically with Stanley Adams and Irving Caesar, among others.

The first *New York Times* article that reviewed a performance by Grever seems to be from 1919 at the Princess Theatre. The critic was not impressed by the voice of the Spanish operatic soprano from Madrid, saying it was "of a type not too familiar, not of utmost beauty", but complimented her "noteworthy phrasing and rhythmic verve".⁴⁰ On that occasion, she performed Spanish pieces as well as Italian and French songs. There are two other accounts from *The New York Times* that tell of the "Spanish composer", one about Grever's first, "Song Dramas", the one-act drama, *The Gypsy* (1927)⁴¹ and the other of a recital of her works at the Pythian Temple.⁴²

The next step in her growing popularity came with her Spanish Tango "Júrame" (1926) in the interpretation of the Mexican-tenor-turned-movie-star-turned-priest José Mojica (1896-1974).⁴³ Don José Mojica, as he asked to be called, gained the reputation of celebrity after the famous Enrico Caruso heard him at an audition in Mexico City in the advent of Caruso's performances in 1919 in Mexico.⁴⁴ In his autobiography, *Yo Pecedor* (1959), Mojica narrates the struggles that the Mexican artists went through at the time and describes his first encounter with María Grever in 1917 in New York as well as their reencounter in Chicago, in 1928.

⁴⁰ The New York Times, Dec. 15, 1919

⁴¹ The New York Times, Feb. 14, 1927

⁴² The New York Times, Feb. 27, 1928

⁴³ For a great article on José Mojica consult John Koegel's article: Mexican Musicians in California and the United States, 1910-50 *California History* , Vol. 84, No. 1 (Fall, 2006) , pp. 6-29 Published by: [University of California Press](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25161856) in association with the [California Historical Society](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25161856) Article Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25161856>

⁴⁴ Enrico Caruso said of Mojica: "He possesses the finest of all Mexican tenor voices I have heard."

It is during the 30s and 40s that Grever's popularity grew internationally. There were three elements that contributed to the development of her career: 1) her appearances with the XEW Mexican radio station; 2) the movies in which her music was featured and were viewed in USA, Mexico, Latin America, Spain and France; and 3) the renowned performers of the era, like Enrico Caruso, José Mojica, Lawrence Tibbett, Tito Schipa, Nino Martini, and Jessica Dragonnette, that often included her songs in their repertoire.

After "Júrame" (1926), many other hits followed, among them "Cuando Vuelva a Tu lado" or in English "What a Difference a Day Makes" (1934) a song that won Dinah Washington a Grammy award, and the song won a place in the Grammy Hall of Fame. In 1935, María Grever joined the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, ASCAP and in 1938, her popular song "Tipi-tipi-tin", by the hand of bandleader Horace Heidt who first presented the song to the audiences, became the number one song in the United States Billboard for 13 weeks giving her wider popularity throughout the USA. In 1939, she composed her miniature opera *El cantarito* discovered a few years back by Nayeli Nesme, Alberto Núñez Palacio and Arturo Márquez. The Times' critic in the occasion of her opera commented that although her music "is not to be taken too seriously" he praised her "innate gift of spontaneous melody."

As her popularity grew in the 1940s, she invested her efforts in healing the relations between Mexico and the United States of America through her music like her operetta *My Mexico*; she joined different initiatives like the *Good Neighbor Policy* and offered concerts featuring her music in Spanish performed by American singers.⁴⁵ In 1941, Grever started plans to produce a Broadway Musical under the name *Hands Across the Border*, co-producing with John Hickey; Chester Hale, choreographer, Clark

⁴⁵ The New York Times, Apr. 16, 1941

Robinson, set designer.⁴⁶ The title was quickly changed a week after it was announced for what is known today as *Viva O'Brien*.⁴⁷ The first Latin-American musical was supposed to have tryouts in Boston and Washington starting on September 29, but apparently, it only had a week and a half in Boston before its opening night on Broadway. *Viva O'Brien* the 'Aquamusical' premiered in October 9 at the Majestic.⁴⁸ It included traditional songs and dances, a swimming pool, and a gentleman "parachuting" to the stage during the performance. The production of *Viva O'Brien* encountered many difficulties from the very beginning, just like the composer had faced at the beginning of her career. The recollection of the musical is found in the book "Broadway Plays and Musicals" by Thomas S. Hischak:

Viva O'Brien (9-10-1941, Majestic) managed to survive for twenty performances. It followed a band of J. Forster Adams's cocktail party guests on a colorful tour of Mexico and their search for a legendary wishing stone. The show employed a nine-foot-deep swimming pool that allowed a diving scene just before the finale. More water was splashed on the stage from an elaborated waterfall, part of a jungle scene that necessitated a ritual dance calling to mind the jungle numbers of the twenties spectacles. Since Chester Hale was the choreographer as well as one of the producers, he saw to it his chorus girls also did some high stepping. (p. 585)

⁴⁶ The New York Times, Aug. 2, 1941

⁴⁷ The New York Times, Aug. 8, 1941

⁴⁸ The New York Times, Oct. 9, 1941

Indeed, *Viva O'Brien* closed on Oct. 25, 1941 with a cost of \$100,000. The aquamusical was announced in *The New York Times* as a "storm-tossed" production.⁴⁹ In terms of Broadway musicals, *Viva O'Brien* was a failure, but that did not stop the composer; on April 14, 1942, she arranged and presented a Latin-American Fiesta alongside musicians, singers and dancers of other nationalities honoring the Pan-American day.⁵⁰ It was reported that diverse groups, like the All-America Friendship League, the Pan-American Society and other women groups wanted to observe and "improve their understanding of the good-neighbor policy."⁵¹ Later that month, Grever hosted talks about Latin-American music at the Woman's Press Club.⁵² She also offered benefit concerts like the one reported in *The New York Times* on May 23rd of that year, "an elaborate program of music of the Americas...presented in the New York Times Hall for the benefit of the Spanish-American Association for the Blind, an organization with headquarters in this city, which aims to arouse interest in the education and care of the blind in all Spanish-speaking countries. María Grever, several of whose compositions figured on the program was the mistress of ceremonies."

What separated María Grever from her contemporaries? Of the many gifts, Grever had as a musician, there are two at which she excelled, melody and poetry. While the majority of the composers relied on the work of poets and lyricist for their compositions, Grever was free of that dependence. A few other composers of her time who wrote their own lyrics were Agustín Lara, Tata Nacho, Jerome Kern, Irving Berling and Cole Porter, although on occasion they also collaborated with poets for some of their works. Nayeli

⁴⁹ The New York Times, Oct. 25, 1941

⁵⁰ The New York Times, Apr. 11, 1942

⁵¹ The New York Times, Apr. 12, 1942

⁵² The New York Times, Apr. 19, 1942

Nesme explains that Grever's music is an "esthetic, emotional, sociological and cultural reference" because her music has been submitted to a wide variety of exposure from the popular to the academic fields. The only documentary on María Grever: *Las que viven en Ciudad Bolero: Trilogía de la Inspiración* (1994) directed by María del Carmen de Lara and Leopoldo Best, agree with the previous statement pointing out that Grever's songs are a bridge between the classical and popular music. Nesme adds that part of that variety is the result of Grever's international upbringing. María Grever expressed during an interview the value and importance of embracing different cultural points of view:

I had to leave my country, and now in New York I am interested in Jazz and Modern Rhythms, but above all, in Mexican Music, which I long to present to the American people. I am afraid they don't know much about it. It is music worth spreading; there is such a cultural richness in Mexican Music (its Hispanic and indigenous origins and how they mix) where melody and rhythm merge. It is my wish and yearning to present the native rhythms and tunes (of Mexico) from a real perspective, but with the necessary flexibility to appeal to the universal audience. [Rodríguez Lee]

She visited Mexico on several occasions. When her music was heard in the XEW radio of Mexico, she became even more famous throughout Latin America. She sang live concerts in Mexico and Cuba. Her interpreters, who also used the radio as a mobile for their art, took her music to Perú, Puerto Rico, Argentina, Colombia, Ecuador, etc. She became a strong influence and a model for the next generation of composers, including Agustín Lara and Ignacio Fernández Esperón.

She was not only a singer and a composer, but also a voice teacher and coach to opera singers like Nino Martini, Gladys Swarthout, Jean Dickenson, Jessica Dragonette and Grace Moore. Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, José Mojica, Alfonso Ortíz Tirado, Placido Domingo, Aretha Franklin, Enrico Caruso, Cole Porter, Nat King Cole and many others have recorded her works. Before she died on May 15, 1951, she was living at the Wellington Hotel on Manhattan's Seventh Avenue.⁵³ She requested that her remains be transferred to Mexico, where she was buried at the Panteón Español (Spanish Cemetery). The Union of Women of the Americas named her "Women of the Americas 1952" at a musicale at the Biltmore Hotel.⁵⁴ She was a devoted Mexican, Spanish and U.S. Citizen.

⁵³ The New York Times, Dec. 16, 1951

⁵⁴ The New York Times, May 5, 1952

María Grever: Selected List of Works

Alphabetical Songlist

Agua, agua! Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Amadeo (Entwurf), Grever Music Publishing, México.

Andalucia (unpublished).

A solas © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Así © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Astral mood (unpublished).

A ti (unpublished).

A dream was born (unpublished).

Acapulco © Robbins International Corporation, New York.

Afternoon (unpublished).

Akuki (unpublished).

Alma mía © Peer International Corporation, New York.

Amor de mis amores (unpublished).

A una ola © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Ausencia (Es gibt zahlreiche Aufnahmen von diesem Stück, jedoch lässt sich weder der Standort noch seine Verlagssituation eruieren).

Ay mulita! (unpublished).

Ay qué bueno! (The flower girl of Miraflores), 1946 © Portilla Music Corporation, New York; Carlos Grever Compañía A. Enp., México.

Bésame © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Brisas © Casa Alemana de Música, México.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Bongo (unpublished).

Bonita como las flores © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Bonita (unpublished).

Boys we love, The © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Cancionera, 1928.

Canción torera, 1931 (Original-Manuskript der Komponistin).

Cacho del cielo, 1936.

Cantarito, 1939.

Chiquitita (unpublished).

Cinco canciones mexicanas de María Grever (Mi canción, Volveré, Tú te llevaste, Si nuestro amor, Acapulco), 1941 © Robbins International Corporation, New York.

Corbade © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

Como tú y yo © Movietone Music Corporation.

Con mi guitarra, 1974.

Con que ése era tu amor (unpublished) © Southern Music Publishing Company Corporation, New York.

Crepúsculo (unpublished).

Cuando me vaya © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Cuando vuelva a tu lado, 1934.

Cúbreme con tu sarape (Wrap me in your sarape), 1941 © "De la Portilla" Publications Incorporation, New York.

Dale, dale, dale © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Dame tu amor © Grever Music Publishing.

Desde que te vi (unpublished).

Despedida (Farewell) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Devuélveme mis besos © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

Diana, La (unpublished).

Dime por Dios, 1929.

Di qué has dejado en mi ser (unpublished).

Distant love (unpublished).

En alta mar, 1931 © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

En la selva (indisches Gedicht, unveröffentlicht).

Eso es mentira © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

Ese tango! © Carlos Grever y Compañía A. Enp., Mexico.

España © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Family's always around © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Florecita, 1930.

From where? © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Gavilán, El (unpublished).

Gitana, La (unpublished).

Gracias por el beso (Thanks for the kiss) (unpublished).

Háblame de tu amor (Heart string) © Edward B. Marks Music Corporation, New York.

Hasta cuándo (Tell me when Lolita) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Hasta la vista (Till we meet again) © G. Schirmer „Incorporation”, New York.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Heaven on earth (unpublished).

Himno de amor a Cristo (My Lord, my Master) (unpublished).

Hojas secas © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

How long © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

I loved you before I meet you © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

I'm saving ev'ry kiss © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Inquietud © Edward B. Marks Music Corporation, New York.

In the jungle (En la selva) (unpublished).

Jacalito (My indian cottage) © Grever Music Publishing, México, 1931.

Jealous moon, 1938 © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Júrame (Promise love) © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Labios rojos (Lips of coral) © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Lamento gitano © Southern Music Publishing Company „Incorporation”, New York.

Lejos muy lejos (unpublished).

Lero lero from Brazil © De la Portilla Publications „Incorporation”, New York.

Let me go back to my dreams © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Little cowboy (On a carrousel) (unpublished).

Loca, loca © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Love passed me by (unpublished).

Lullaby to love (Así) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Make love with a guitar © Maria Grever Corporation, New York.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Mañana por la mañana (Long before the break of day) © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Mariachi serenade, The © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

México canta © Edwing H. Morris and Company Incorporation.

Mi amor por ti (unpublished).

My burro and I (unpublished).

Mi Tesoro (Thanks for the kiss) © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Montecito (En la senda de mis sueños) © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Mood of the moment © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Muzabamba (unpublished).

Mucho más (Where is the thrill?) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Mulita (Muriel, the mule) © Maria Grever Corporation, New York.

My Guadalupe © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

My Margarita (El Charro) © Leo Fiest Incorporation, New York.

No espero nada de ti (unpublished).

No me lo digas © Carlos Grever Compañía A. Enp., México.

No, no señor (unpublished).

Our love (Por qué) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Our song © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Out from the dark (unpublished).

Out of this world © Grever Music Publishing, México.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Para qué recordar (A star broke into a song) © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Passing silhouette (unpublished).

Pícara (unpublished).

Por si no te vuelvo a ver © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York. Pregón de las flores, 1929.

Pun catapún chin chin © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Quejas flamencas (unpublished).

Qué ha puesto Dios en ti? (unpublished).

Querida mía (unpublished).

Quién eres tú? © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Rataplán © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Reliquia de amor (Talken of love), Biblioteca National de España.

Saudade © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Será porque te quiero (unpublished).

Si nuestro amor (Fue para ti) © Robbins International Corporation, New York.

Summer rain (No me jures amor) © Carlos Grever Compañía A. Enp., México

Te vi (My first, my last, my only) © Edwing H. Morris and Company Incorporation.

This is the theme of our song (unpublished).

Ti pi Tin © Leo Feist Incorporation, New York.

Todo mi ser © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

To love or not to love (unpublished).

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

To prove my love © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Try your luck (unpublished).

Tu-li-tulip time © Chapell and Company Incorporation.

Tú te llevaste © Robbins International Corporation, New York.

Tú, tú y tú (You only you) © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Twilight in Spain (Atardecer en España) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Última canción, La © De la Portilla Publications Incorporation, New York.

Un beso © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

Vámonos © Southern Music Publishing Company Incorporation, New York.

Vida mía (unpublished).

Volveré © Robbins International Corporation, New York.

What a difference a day makes © Edward B. Marks Music Corporations, New York.

When the bells of Britain (Ring again each Sunday) © Grever Music Publishing.

Where is the thrill © María Grever Corporation, New York.

While pretending © Ediciones Musicales Habana, Cuba.

Willing to wait (unpublished).

Xochimilco moon (unpublished).

Ya no me quieres (You're all the matter to me) © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

Yo no sé (I know not) © G. Schirmer Incorporation, New York.

Your dreams hear me calling © Portilla Music Corporation, New York.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

Music Films and Movies

East is west Romance drama B&W film in English, 75 Min., Monta Bell, E. M. Asher and Carl Leammle Jr, Universal Pictures Corporation Los Angeles 23 Oct 1930. In Spanish directed by George Melford and Enrique Tovar Ávalos.

Actress: Lupe Velez

Song: "Júrame" music and lyrics María Grever

Spanish version: "Oriente es Occidente" and "El Barco del Amor"

San José, Costa Rica: 30 Nov. 1930

Los Angeles: 26 Dec. 1930

Una Cana al Aire Comedy, B&W film in Spanish, 41 mins., James W. Horne, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Los Angeles, USA, 21 Nov. 1930

Song: "Júrame"

French version "Gare la Bombe!"

Cuando el Amor Rie Melodrama with songs B&W film in Spanish, 57 mins., David Howard, Fox Film Corporation, New York, 26 Dec. 1930.

Actor: José Mojica

Song: "Mi Serenata" music and lyrics by María Grever

Presented in Barcelona, Spain as "Ladrón de Amor and in Havana, Cuba as "El Domador de Mujeres"

El Príncipe del Dólar Comedy, B&W film in Spanish, 45 min., James W. Horne, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Havana, Cuba: 15 Dec. 1930, San Juan, Puerto Rico: 25 Jul 1931

Song: "A una ola" by María Grever

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

French version: "Les chercheuses d'or"

Seas Beneath, Black&White film in English/Spanish, 90 Min., Fox Film Corporation, USA, 1931.

El príncipe gondolero (The Gondolier Prince), Musical comedy, B&W, 79 Min.

Paramount Publix Corp., Los Angeles USA, 10 Jul. 1931.

Music by María Grever and Karl Hajos

Songs: "Barcarola coreada," "Veneciana," "La Mujer ha de dominar" and "Vals"

composers undetermined.

La Melodía Prohibida Island, Musical drama, B&W film in Spanish, Frank Strayer, Fox Film Corporation, Los Angeles, 13 Sep 1933

Actor: José Mojica

Songs: "Como tu y yo" and "Cuando me vaya" music an lyrics by Grever

Señora Casada Necesita Marido Domestic comedy, B&W film in Spanish, James Tingling, Fox Film Corporation, New York, 8 Feb. 1935

Song: "Qué Sabes Tu?" music by Maria Grever

Modern Tokyo, Technicolor Documentary, 10 Min., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, USA, 1935.

Cherry Blossom time in Japan, Black&White documentary in English, 7 Min.,

FritzPatrick Pictures und Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, USA, 1936.

Nancy goes to Rio, Musical film, 103 Min. Universal Pictures, USA, 1940.

Song: "Magic is the Moonlight" english lyrics by Charles Pasquale

Bathing Beauty, Technicolor Film in English, 101 Min., Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM), USA, 1944.

María Grever: Selected List of Works (continued)

La mujer sin alma, 129 Min., Black&White Film in Spanish, Cinematográfica de Guadalajara S.A, Mexico, 1944.

Te besaré en la boca, Film in Spanish, Producciones México, Mexico, 1950.

Cuando me vaya, Original Black&White film in Spanish, Mono, 110 Min., México, 1954.

Cuando me vaya, DVD/NTSC, in Spanish, Producciones Albarran B & m, San Marcos/USA, 2003.

(Source: http://mugi.hfmt-hamburg.de/A_lexartikel/lexartikel.php?id=grev1885)

Name disambiguations:

Maria Mendez Grever

Maria Greever

Maria Griver

Maria Greaver

Maria Grever PhD., Professor of Theory and Methodology of History, and director of the Center for Historical Culture at Erasmus University Rotterdam.

Ignacio Fernández Esperón "Tata Nacho" (1894 - 1968)

Ignacio Fernández Esperón was born on February 14, 1894 in the city of Tlacolula, Oaxaca to a family of means.⁵⁵ A truly bohemian personality of the time, Ignacio Fernández Esperón, better known by his childhood nickname "Tata Nacho," was described as a humble and amicable person. He was a pianist, composer, poet, musicologist and "collector of Mexican folk-songs" and a very active composer of the beginning of the 20th century. His works are numbered in the hundreds; most of them are songs in the *canción* form; "Canción Mixteca" and "La Borrachita" are among his most recognizable pieces. The prominence that his compositions reached in his lifetime gained him the nickname "Padre de la canción Mexicana" (Father of the Mexican song).

He is the son of the distinguished physician and music lover Ignacio Fernández Ortigoza and Piedad Esperón Alcalá, an accomplished pianist. When Tata Nacho was five years old, Ms. Esperón taught him the first piano and solfeggio lessons; later, he continued his piano studies under Macedonia Alcalá, niece of Macedonio Alcalá, composer of the also famous Mexican waltz "Dios Nunca Muere" (God Never Dies) and great-grandfather of Tata Nacho. He is also a cousin of Manuel Esperón, composer of Mexico's second national anthem, the popular "México Lindo y Querido". (Beautiful and Beloved Mexico).

He was still a little boy when his family moved to Mexico City in the borough of Cuauhtémoc in the Colonia Santa María la Ribera; his parents frequently hosted evening soirees on Sundays that used to last up to midnight.⁵⁶ The guests included a select group

⁵⁵ According to his daughter "Malu;" Tata Nacho was born on a trip to Mexico City. *Herederos de la Música con Joe Armenta-Tata Nacho*. DGEST TV Feb 14, 2013.

⁵⁶ *El bar: la vida literaria de México en 1900*. Pg. 161-162

of lawyers and politicians and the most important artists and poets of the time such as, Amado Nervo (poet), Alberto Villaseñor (pianist), Antonia Ochoa de Miranda (singer), Luz Buen Abad (pianist), Pedro Valdés Fraga (violinist), Arturo Espinosa (cellist), Artemisa Elizondo (pianist), Luis G. Urbina (poet), and many others.

Before he decided to become a musician, he enrolled at the Escuela Nacional de Maestros, (National School of Teachers) and started studying agronomy engineering in Chapingo, a career that he quickly stopped pursuing. He then moved back to Oaxaca into his uncles' house until he finally settled himself in Mexico City after the death of his father, finding a job repairing typing machines. Tata Nacho furthered his piano studies with Salvador Ochoa Ordoñez, famous pianist and pupil of Manuel M. Ponce.

From his first marriage with María Zepeda Ávila, they gave birth to one daughter, Ma. Piedad Susana "Suzy". María Zepeda passed away giving birth to a second baby that died at birth as well. Years later, he met his second wife, María del Refugio González in Guadalajara marrying her in 1941, procreating two children: Maria Luisa "Malú" (b.1949) and Mario Ignacio "Manacho".

His first canción was "*Carlota*" (1913) a waltz inspired on the Mexican empress followed by "*Dime Ingrata*" (1916) and "*Primaveral*" with lyrics written by the poet Ricardo López Méndez "*El Vate*" and presumably premiered at the Palacio de Bellas Artes by the soprano Ernestina Garfias. "Adiós mi Chaparrita" and "La Borrachita," were the first two works that became popular, composed in 1917, but not copyrighted until 1921.

Looking to further his musical studies, he moved to New York City in 1919 and studied composition under Edgar Varèse from 1920 to 1924. There are sources that claim

he was George Gershwin's roommate while he was in New York. In my research, I was unable to find trustworthy sources that confirmed or denied this fact. However, it is very probable they knew each other because they shared friends in common like the Mexican muralists Alfaro Siqueiros and Diego Rivera, the musicians Edgar Varèse and Carlos Chávez, and the caricaturist Miguel Covarrubias, among others. To pay for his living expenses while in New York, he worked for the Mexican consulate during the day and by night, Tata Nacho played the piano at a bar called *Club Gallant*, located at the corner of McDougald and Washington Square in the *bohemian capital* of New York: Greenwich Village.⁵⁷ Tata Nacho was highly criticized for Jose Juan Tablada because apparently Varèse, a friend of both, had seen Tata Nacho dressed up in Mexican attire presuming being a direct descendant of Moctezuma, while accompanying himself "*La Borrachita*" at the piano with exaggerated mannerisms. From this early compositional period is the gymnastic dance "Tehuana" (1921), his collaboration with Richard Rodgers and Lorenz Hart for the Broadway show *The Garrick Gaities* (1925), with the musical number "Rancho Mexicano" of which Miguel Covarrubias designed the set.⁵⁸ The book *American Musical Theatre: A Chronicle* (1978) reads:

The evening's lone bow to "spectacle" was the opening of the second act. [Rancho Mexicano] was danced by Rose Rolando in a multi-colored set designed by her husband, the distinguished artist Miguel Covarrubias.

It was in 1927, on his return to Mexico City, when he had a breakthrough in his musical career. In that year, he worked as an ethnomusicologist for the Minister of Education, José Vasconcelos (1882-1959); albeit being a fairly brief job, it gave him the

⁵⁷ Bernard "Barney" Gallant (1884 - 1968) was the owner of the club and was the first person in New York City to be arrested for violating the Volstead Act in 1919.

⁵⁸ *The Garrick Gaities*. José Juan Tablada, "Nueva York de Día y de Noche," *El Universal*, 31 May 1925, sec. 1, p. 3.

opportunity to travel throughout Mexican territory developing his musical ideas. Colleagues in this endeavor included Manuel M. Ponce, Blas Galindo, Angel Salas and Vicente T. Mendoza.⁵⁹ Many of the results of these expeditions were published mostly by Vicente T. Mendoza, who would later write a book on the topic of the Corridos of the Mexican Revolution (*El corrido de la Revolución Mexicana*, 1956). When the governor of Yucatán invited Tata Nacho to visit that state, the composer studied the Canción Yucateca and became friends with the popular composer Guty Cárdenas. Tata Nacho gained notoriety as a composer after he participated in the "Concurso de la Canción Mexicana" (Mexican song competition of 1927) hosted by the Teatro Lírico, placing 2nd with his song "Menudita." The first prize was for Guty Cárdenas and his bolero song "Nunca."

During the 1920s, alongside Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Alfonso Esparza Oteo and Mario Talavera, he founded "*Los Ases de la Canción*" (The Aces of the Song), after Lerdo de Tejada died, the three musicians formed the *Trio Veneno* (Venom Trio), antecessor and model for the Trios of the golden age of the *canción*. That same year, Tata Nacho composed the lyric-scene *Revista Nacional* premiered on September 16, 1928 at the Teatro Nacional in Mexico City and presented it the following year in Seville, Spain when he traveled as part of the consular group of artists and intellectuals that represented Mexico at the Ibero-American Exhibition. To a libretto by Carlos González and Jacobo Dalevuelta, *Revista Nacional* is composed of three parts: I. Época legendaria y precortesiana, II. Dominación española, III. Época independiente. While in Seville, the King, Alfonso XIII, who recognized the composer walking down the street and picked

⁵⁹ Geijerstam asserts: "Mendoza was the only researcher who had ethnographic training. All the others obtained their positions solely on the basis of their reputations as composers, and their ability to read and write down music." His last sentence is still true today.

him up in the Royal Carriage; this made Tata Nacho very popular during the Ibero-American Exhibition.⁶⁰ In 1930, after he completed his duty representing Mexico in Seville, he left for Paris to further his orchestration studies with Edgar Varèse and Paul Le Flem, who was professor of the Schola Cantorum and the Paris Conservatoire.⁶¹ He joined the Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique in Paris, from where he took the idea for the same institution he created years later in Mexico.

While in Paris and at the request of his Cuban friend, musicologist and poet Alejo Carpentier,⁶² Tata Nacho collaborated with Darius Milhaud providing him with military Mexican themes for Milhaud's historic 3rd act opera *Maximilien*, *op. 110*, composed in 1930 and premiered at the Paris Opéra.⁶³ He also collaborated with Jean-Louis Barrault (1910-1994) composing the music for *Autour d'une mère* (1935) premiered at the Montmartre Theatre in Paris. When Tata Nacho finally settled down in Mexico City in the mid 1930s, he debuted in the XEW radio station. Later, in 1947, he became the announcer of the radio program "Así es mi tierra" (This is the way my land is). He also composed the music for a film of the same name in which Mario Moreno "Cantinflas" is the main actor and is the first movie in which the Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitlán appeared at the request of the composer.

Alongside Alfonso Esparza Oteo, Mario Talavera and Gonzalo Curiel among others, was the founding member of the *Sindicato Mexicano de Autores, Compositores y*

⁶⁰ Enciclopedia Ilustrada Espasa, Suplemento 1968-1969 pg. 272

⁶¹ Paul Le Flem (1881-1984), teacher of Erik Satie. Many sources about Tata Nacho wrongfully cite "Paul de Fleur" or "Paul de Flem" neither of these persons, to the extent of my knowledge, existed. The evidence that confirm my findings is that Edgar Varèse and Paul Le Flem were prominent teachers of the era sought out by young composers, both taught in Paris at one point. One example is US composer Colin McPhee (1900-1964). He studied with Le Flem in Paris from 1924-26 and then moved to New York to study under Varèse. Carlos Chavez premiered *Tabuh-Tabuhan* in 1936 while McPhee lived in Mexico City.

⁶² They met in Cuba circa 1924-25 and frequented each other in Paris in the 1930's.

⁶³ "Having struggled to establish himself as a serious composer in France, Darius Milhaud gradually became accepted in the early 1930's, gaining his first major performance at the Paris Opéra on 5 January 1932 with *Maximilien*" Kelly, Barbara L. *Tradition and Style in the Works of Darius Milhaud: 1912 - 1939*. Pg 175

Editores de Música (1939) that in 1948 changed its name to *Sociedad de Autores y Compositores de México* (SACM); of which he became its president from 1963 until his untimely death. The SACM was modeled after the French association of the same name, *Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique* (SACEM). In 1940, Tata Nacho invented "*La Rondalla de Tata Nacho*", the first musical group of its kind, integrated by 19 musicians with Mexican instruments that included salterios, mandolines, bandolones, guitars, marimbas and contrabass, this became the model for the regular aggrupation of guitars and singers now popularly known as "Rondalla".

In 1953, a diverse, but select group of artists, bullfighters, journalists, poets, businessmen, entrepreneurs and musicians like Manuel Horta, Raúl Horta, Adolfo Best Maugard, Roberto Montenegro, Adolfo Fernández Bustamante, Mario Moreno "Cantinflas", Pedro Vargas, Andrés Bello, Mario Talavera, Miguel Covarrubias, Alfonso Noriega, Gerardo Murillo "Dr. Atl", Ernesto García Cabral and Tata Nacho founded the bohemian club *Los Pergaminos* (The Parchment); a group that, according with Carlos Monsiváis, "*jokes on the antediluvian era in which they grew up...and the joy of the evocations*", as well as their love of bullfights.

The last decade of his life, the 1960s, was filled with many career accomplishments. From 1960-1968, he was appointed conductor of the *Orquesta Típica de la Ciudad de México* founded in 1884 by the Italian Carlos Curti (1859-1926). He received the Golden Record as the best artist of 1963. Named president of the Unión Latinoamericana de Sociedades de Autores y Compositores (ULSAC), member of the *Academia de Artes* (1966), prize "Emilio Azcárraga" (may 1967), decorated by the

Mexican President Adolfo López Mateos, received the "Palme Académiques" from the French Embassy, among many other awards and acknowledgments.

He befriended poets, painters, musicians and journalists like García Lorca, Amado Nervo, Carlos Chávez, Julián Carrillo, Manuel M. Ponce, Blas Galindo, Katherine Ann Porter, José Juan Tablada, Ana Pavlova, Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, Pedro Vargas, Diego Rivera, Alfaro Siqueiros, Clemente Orozco, Antonin Artaud, etc.

Tata Nacho composed a number of serious pieces, including piano works, Diez romanzas en estilo clasicista; String quartet (1934); 3 Trios (1935-1937), El Zihuato fantasia for piano and orchestra (1939) but they never premiered. According to his friend Eulalio Ferrer Rodríguez, exiled Spanish journalist in Mexico, Tata Nacho passed away leaving incomplete a musical work based on some of the 651 verses of José Gorostiza's poem "Muerte sin Fin" (Death Without End, 1939). Tata Nacho died the same day of the assassination of Robert F. Kennedy, June 5, 1968.

Ignacio Fernández Esperón: Selected list of Works

Piano works

Berceuse

Carlota (versión para piano solo, 1913)

Primaveral (versión para piano solo, 1921)

Tema en Re bemol

Canciones:

Abre Tus Ojos

Con Toda El Alma

Adiós Mi Chaparrita

Corrido De Despedida A Carlos Darío

LM TN (This Is Goodbye)

Couplet Francés

Al Viento

Cuídate Mucho

Amanecer Ranchero

Dime Ingrata

Así Es Mi Tierra

El Arrepentido

Ausencia

El Cántaro Roto

Ay Qué Rebosito!

El Chilpayate

Bartolacho

El Novio Despuntado

Boquita Azucaráa...

El Otoño

Brisas Del Viento

El Pajarito

Canción A Mi Madre

El Rancho De La Discordia

Cancioncitas

El Vestido Colorado

Capullito De Rosa

El Zihuateco

Carlota

Entonces

China, China, Chinita

Erótica

Ignacio Fernández Esperón: Selected list of Works (continued)

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Esquiva | Morenita Tapatía |
| Es Media Noche (Il Est Minuit) | Muchachita Tropical |
| Firpazos | Ni Yo He De Ver La Traición |
| Gringuita Mía | Niños |
| Imagen | No Se Por Qué! |
| Íntima | No, Tu No |
| Jardincito De Mi Infancia | Nunca, Nunca, Nunca |
| La Borrachita | Osadía |
| La Chata | Otra Vez (Quiero Ver) |
| La Culebra | Pacto De Sangre |
| La Guayaba | Para Que Quiero Más |
| La Rondalla | Pato Pinto |
| La Violinera | Piedad |
| Madrigal | Pobre Mujer |
| Mélodie | Por Una Morena |
| Menudita | Primaveral (Lyrics: Lopez Mendez) |
| Mi Canción | Prontito Será |
| Mira Mi Vida | Puebla Bonita (Lyrics: Rodolfo Sandoval) |
| Mírenme Esos Ojitos | Puerto Vallarta |
| Morenita Sanjuanera (Cuando Abrirás Tu Ventana) | Que Sí, Que No ¡Qué Triste Estoy! |

Ignacio Fernández Esperón: Selected list of Works (continued)

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Queja (Lyrics: José Dávila) | Solo De Tí Y De Mí (Translation Of Tata |
| Quera Dios | Nacho To An Old English Poem) |
| Quero Pleito | Te Diré (Vals Cursi) |
| Reproche | Ticuricú |
| Rosa Marchita | Tienes Razón |
| Rumbita | Tu Imagen |
| Sabes Por Qué (Tengo Nostalgia De Ti) | Tu Y Yo |
| Saeta A Maria Fernanda | Y Cuando El Dedo Señala |
| Sans Paroles | Ya Caí |
| Serenata | Ya No Me Vengas A Llorar |
| Serenata Ranchera | Ya Perdí Las Esperanzas |
| Sh...! | Ya Se Va |
| Si...! | Ya Va Cayendo |
| Si Me Viera Don Porfirio | Yo Buscaré |

Arrangements:

1915-1965. About 30 piano arrangements on traditional mexican melodies including “Me voy para Mazatlán”, Mexican Folkways, vol. IV, sn., Nueva York- cd. de México, 1928, pp. 204-205 (from the private collection of Concha Michel).

Sources: Tata Nacho el bohemio, Del Río

Diccionario Enciclopédico de Música en México, Pareyón

SACM Website www.sacm.org.mx

*Agustín Lara (1897 - 1970)*⁶⁴

"Everybody agrees that Lara is the best composer of Mexico"

Rosa Castro, *Hoy* March 15th, 1950

Much has been written about Agustín Lara who was the epitome of the bohemian, a hopeless romantic and whose work was inspired in the women he met throughout his life. He used to improvise on the piano and owned a singing voice similar in beauty to that of the famous trumpet player Louis Armstrong (1901-1971). His personality was tacky and cheesy and he could care less about it; creating his own legend by fabricating all sort of stories and facts about his life. He was a Mexican actor, poet and mostly self-taught musician, singer and songwriter. Three cities claim to be the composer's birthplace:

- 1) Mexico City,
- 2 Tlatlauquitepec, Puebla (aka Tlatlauqui) and
- 3) Tlacotalpan, Veracruz.

This is just one of many myths created by the composer. Certainly, his family lived in Mexico City in the borough of Coyoacán when he was still an infant. Nevertheless, and to add to his own legend, Agustín Lara considered himself from the small town of Tlacotalpan, Veracruz. María Aguirre del Pino, his mother, was a pianist, but his first music teacher was Luz Torres Torrija. Agustín's aunt Refugio Aguirre introduced the child to his first musical experiences at the Hospice where she was the

⁶⁴ Gabriel Pareyon. Agustín Lara. *Diccionario Enciclopédico De Música En Mexico*. Andrew Grant Wood. Agustín Lara: A Cultural Biography.

director, noticing the interest of the child arranged his first piano lessons with Luz Torres Torrija, although she was unsuccessful to get the young Agustín to read music.

Early in his life Agustín attended the Colegio Militar; Lara dropped out school and started playing piano in bordellos and cabarets to the disapproval of his father, Joaquín Lara, a military physician. His first connection with artists of stature came in 1928 when he started working for the tenor Juan Arvizu as composer and accompanist. Lara quickly began associating himself with other artists like Maruca Pérez and the Trío Garnica Ascencio. In September 1930, Lara began a successful radio career in the Mexican station XEW when he was hired to perform during the inaugural transmission, an association that lasted for the rest of his life. He became the announcer of programs like *La Hora del Aficionado (The Amateur Hour)*, *La Hora Azul (The Blue Hour)*, *La Hora Íntima de Agustín Lara (The Intimate Hour of Agustín Lara)* programs that were beloved by all Mexicans. This exclusivity contract catapulted his career by making his music known everywhere; and, at the same time, helped him to keep growing and nourishing his artistic circle. In 1931 formed his first orchestra "El Son Marabú" giving performances in theatres and exclusive halls in Mexico City. Agustín Lara also launched the musical career of several singers, such as "Toña La Negra" who, also sang his songs and would go on to sing at his funeral. She became famous with Lara's *Lamento Jarocho (1933)* and *Veracruz (1936)*. Soon after his debut with the XEW radio station, he started combining acting while composing songs for such films as *Santa (1931)*, the first Mexican sound film. With the help of his sister Maria Teresa (1904-1984), a formal pianist, he wrote new songs like *Azul*, *Janitzio*, *Mujer*, *Noche de Ronda* and *Piensa en mi*. Other singers that interpreted successfully Lara's music were Las Hermanas Águila,

Antonio Badú, Ana María Fernández, Pepe Jara, María Luisa Landín, Amparo Montes, Elvira Ríos, Pedro Vargas and Consuelo Vidal.

Lara became the most prominent exponent of the bolero, a form with which he became familiar during his trip to Cuba in 1933. The development of the Bolero is considered to be his most important contribution to the music world; it has its musical roots in Cuba, but Lara's influence to the form was so vast that it is often believed to be of Mexican origin. His most assertive contribution to the bolero was the change of metric from 2/4 to 4/4, making it more apt for the romanticism and declamation of the often bohemian, nostalgic, dramatic and sentimental lyrics.

His increasing fame on radio and movies opened doors to successful tours through South America between 1949 and 1961, accompanied in many of them by tenor Pedro Vargas. It is during one of these tours that he composed *Solamente Una Vez* in Buenos Aires with special dedication to tenor José Mojica. Other songs from this time are *Veracruz*, *Tropicana*, and *Pecadora*. Some of the successful songs that belong to his last songwriting period are *María bonita*, *Cuando vuelvas*, *Desquite* and *Te fuiste*, he also wrote an opereta called *El pájaro de oro*.

Lara was a beloved celebrity throughout Mexico, Latinamerica, France and Spain. He became honorary vitalice president of the SACM and had numerous wives but not descendants: that might be why he adopted Agustín Lara Lárraga,⁶⁵ Vianey Lárraga's son, one of his wives.

Although he had never visited Spain until 1965, during the first decade of the 1940s, he composed and dedicated songs to Spain that are still very famous and well

⁶⁵ Andrew Grant Wood : Agustín Lara: A Cultural Biography. pag. 190

known like *Toledo*, *Cuerdas de mi Guitarra*, *Granada*, *Sevilla* and *Madrid*. These songs made him a very well known name in Spain. When he finally visited Spain in 1965, the then dictator Francisco Franco gave him a house in the city of Granada to show his appreciation for his Spanish music; additional honors and decorations followed from around the world.

In 1968, Lara's health began to decline rapidly; an accident that fractured his pelvis further aggravated his condition. On November 6, 1970, Lara died and was buried in Mexico City. By the time of his death, Lara had written more than 700 songs, many of them in the bolero style but he also composed fox trots, tangoes, pasodobles, etc.

There are three monuments in his honor; one in his beloved pier in Veracruz, another in the popular neighborhood of Lavapiés, Madrid and the most recent one in Polanco, Mexico City. Although as popular as he was, he also received harsh critics from the conservative Mexican society, his critics condemned that his works "did not contribute to the nationalistic music and instead, imitated the lyrical compositions of Spain and South America," "did not added to the *canción*, not in the poetry or music," his music was condemned "for praising and even santifying the prostitutes" -a clear reference to his movie "Santa"- or that his songs were simple and plain "popular."

Regardless of the simplicity of his songs, which Lara provides with spontaneity of rhythm and melody and his emotional lyrics, his songs have remained in the repertoire of Latinamerica. On his defense, some of his followers point out that his music contributed to the enrichment of the Mexican bolero contraresting the Jazz and Tango that were strongly popular at the time.

Agustín Lara: Selected list of Works

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| A La Sombra Del Guayabal | Anoche |
| A Poco No | Anoche Te Senti |
| A Tus Pies | Ansia |
| Abanico | Aquel Amor |
| Adios | Arabia |
| Adios Mi Juan | Arlequin |
| Adios Nicanor | Arroyito |
| Al Fin | Asi Canta Mi Patria |
| Al Mar | Aunque No Me Quieras |
| Al Sol | Aunque Quiera Olvidarte |
| Al Volver A La Vida | Ausencia |
| Alguna Vez | Aventurera |
| Alma Cancionera | Ay Manito |
| Alondra | Banderillas |
| Amame | Bebe |
| Amapolita | Bendita Palabra |
| Amar En Silencio | Bermellon |
| Amok Mf | Besa |
| Amor De Ayer | Boca Chiquita |
| Amor De Carnaval | Boca De Corazon |
| Amor Fatal | Bola Negra |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of Works (continued)

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| Bolero De Agustin | Carita De Cielo |
| Bonita | Cartera Vieja |
| Borracho Y Jugador | Casablanca |
| Brasil | Casi Un Angel |
| Broadway Adios | Casita Blanca |
| Brujeria | Cautiva |
| Buscandote | Celestina |
| Ca Ressemble A L Amour | Chamaquita |
| Cabellera Blanca | Clave Azul |
| Cabellera Negra | Clavel Sevillano |
| Cabellera Rubia | Clavelito |
| Cachito De Sol | Collar De Diamantes |
| Cada Noche Un Amor | Como Dos Puñales |
| Camaguey | Como Eres |
| Caminante | Como Te Extrano |
| Campanitas De Mi Tierra | Compas De Espera |
| Cana Brava | Consejo |
| Canalla | Contraste |
| Cancioncita | Copla |
| Cantar Del Regimiento | Copla Guajira |
| Carinito | Corazon De Seda |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|------------------------------|------------------------|
| Corrido De Agustin Lara | Después |
| Cortesana | Dia De Primavera |
| Crisantema | Dime Si Me Quieres |
| Cuando Brillen Las Luces | Dolorosa |
| Cuando Llegaste | Domingo Ortega |
| Cuando Me Miraste Tu | Dos Rosales |
| Cuando Pase Tu Amor | Duda |
| Cuando Un Amor Florece | Dulce Maria |
| Cuando Vuelvas | El Adios Del Marino |
| Cuerdas De Mi Guitarra | El Adios Del Soldado |
| Danzones De Agustin Lara | El Capulin |
| Danzones Noche De V Palmeras | El Cielo El Mar Y Tu |
| De Mi Vida | El Cofre |
| De Noche | El Cordobes |
| De Riguroso Schottis | El Guayabal |
| De Vuelta | El Mosiu Se Puso Bravo |
| Dejame | El Nidito |
| Dejame Vivir | El Organillero |
| Derniere Reverie | El Puñal |
| Desolacion | El Vals Del Cuadro |
| Despierta | Ella Dijo Asi |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| En Revancha | Gitanillo |
| En Vano Espero | Gorrioncito |
| Enamorada | Gota De Miel |
| Engaño | Gotas De Amor |
| Entre Los Dos | Granada |
| Entre Tu Y Yo | Habana |
| Escarcha | Homenaje A Agustin Lara |
| Espanolerias | Horizonte |
| Estoy Pensando En Ti | Humo En Los Ojos |
| Estrella | Imposible |
| Estrella Solitaria | Ingrata |
| Farolito | Jamas |
| Fasiquillo | Jardin De Amores |
| Fermin | Junto A Ti |
| Flor De Lis | Juramento |
| Floracion | La Carmen De Chamberi |
| Florecita | La Cumbancha |
| Flores De Cafetal | La Faraona |
| Frente A Frente | La Marimba |
| Fue Asi | La Puerta De Oro |
| Fugitiva | La Vi Pasar |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Lagrimas De Sangre | Me Voy |
| Lagrimas Y Besos | Melodias De Lara |
| Lagunera | Mensaje |
| Lamento Espanol | Mentira |
| Lamento Jarocho | Mi Dulce Maria |
| Las Golondrinas | Mi Ley Es Amarte |
| Latin American Evergreen | Mi Novia |
| Latin American Fantasie | Mi Primer Amor |
| Limosna | Mi Querer |
| Lo De Siempre | Mi Ultimo Amor |
| Lo Que Somos | Mia |
| Loca Tentacion | Mia No Mas |
| Los Cuatro Gatos | Miedo |
| Los Toros Jovenes | Migaja |
| Luna Luna Luna | Milagro |
| Madrid | Milagro De Tus Ojos Negros E |
| Manolete | Mirame |
| Margot | Mirando Al Mar |
| Maria Bonita | Miseria |
| Mas Tarde | Monisima |
| Me Quieres | Mujer |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Montunito De Mi Tierra | Nunca Mas |
| Muchacha | Nunca Podre Besar |
| Mucho Mucho | Ojos Negros |
| Mujer | Ojos Verde Mar |
| Mujercita | Once Maneras De Ponerse Un Sombrero |
| Muñeca | Orgía |
| Musica De Francia | Orgullo |
| Nacida Para Amar | Otoño |
| Nadie | Otra Vez |
| Nana | Padre De Mas De Cuatro Mf |
| Naufragio | Paginas Rotas |
| No Quiero | Pajarito |
| No Se Porque | Palabras De Mujer |
| No Te Perdonare | Palmera |
| No Tengo La Culpa | Paloma Torcaza |
| No Volvera | Palomita Palomita |
| Noche Criolla | Para Adorarte |
| Noche Tibia Y Callada | Para Que Me La Quitas |
| Nocturno | Para Ti |
| Nos Volveremos A Encontrar | Pecadora |
| Nueva Flor | Pensando En Ti |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Pervertida | Quiereme |
| Peteneras | Rancho De Texas |
| Pideme Lo Que Quieras | Rapsodia En Oro |
| Piensalo Bien | Rapsodia En Rosa |
| Playera | Regalo De Viaje |
| Pobre De Mi | Reina |
| Pobrecita De Mi Alma | Reina Mia |
| Poco A Poco | Reliquia |
| Por Que Negar | Reproche |
| Por Que Te Quiero | Rocio |
| Por Que Ya No Me Quieres | Romance |
| Porque No He De Quererte | Rosa |
| Porque Te Vas | Rosa Castellana |
| Porque Te Vi En La Sombra | Rosa De Francia |
| Potpourit | Rubrica |
| Poupurri | Saca Los Nardos Morena |
| Pregon | Sagimera |
| Primavera | Santa |
| Puerto Nuevo | Se Me Hizo Facil |
| Que Voy A Hacer | Se Mia Esta Noche |
| Quien Me Roba Tu Amor | Se Que No Has De Volver |
| Quien Te Quiere Mas | Senora Tentacion |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Señorita Sonrisa | Sombras |
| Serenade For Two | Su Amado |
| Serenata | Sueño Guajiro |
| Serpentina | Suerte Loca |
| Sevilla | Sultana |
| Si Me Besaras | Talisman |
| Si Me Dejas Que Te Bese | Tanger |
| Si Supieras | Tanto He Sufrido |
| Si Yo Pudiera | Tardecita |
| Silencio | Te Alejas |
| Silverio | Te Fuiste |
| Sin Saber Por Que | Te Quieres Ir |
| Sin Ti | Te Vendes |
| Sin Tus Ojos | Tehuanita |
| Sinfonia | Temor |
| Sintiendo Una Pena | Tengo Celos |
| Solamente Una Vez (You Belong To My Heart) | Tengo Ganas De Un Beso |
| Solo Para Ti | Tengo Mucho Miedo |
| Solo Tu | Tentacion |
| Solo Una Vez | Tesoro Mio |
| | Tienes Mi Corazon |

Agustín Lara: Selected list of works (continued)

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------|
| Tierra Mexicana | Vencida |
| Tirana | Vendedora De Amor |
| Todavía | Virgen De Media Noche Mf |
| Toledo | Vivir Es Todo |
| Tonadita | Vivire Para Ti |
| Triste Camino | Volveras |
| Tu | Vuelve Al Nido |
| Tu Mirar | Vuelve Otra Vez |
| Tu No Puedes Saber | Ya Me Voy |
| Tu Retrato | Ya No Me Acuerdo |
| Tu Ventana | Yi Yi |
| Tus Ojitos | Yo Soy Asi |
| Tus Pupilas | Yucateca |
| Ultimo Beso | Zaraza |
| Un Beso | Zumba |
| Un Beso A Solas | Source: SACM Website |
| Un Poco De Lo Mio | www.sacm.org.mx |
| Una Cualquiera | |
| Valiente | |
| Vanidad | |
| Ven Aca | |

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Chapter Five: Conclusion

What have we learned from all this and why is the Canción Important?

Generally, “classical musicians” underrate popular music. It is true that "popular" music lacks developmental features of what we have come to know as "classical" or "high-end" music, but on the other end, we have the "simplicity" of the *canciones*, a simple musical form but nevertheless, with an extremely tight relation of the lyrics, melody, social and historic components that add up making the *canción*, a genre not so easy to explain. Mexican popular music of this era contains all those elements and presents them in perfect balance. The beautifully written melodies enable the trained singer to express and deliver the romantic lyrics, which is the most important entity of the *canción*. The lyrics speak part of the story of Mexico, a window to the past.

Each one of these songs recreates infinite worlds of people's feelings, or the way María Grever described them: "Human fragments" in which the manifestations of humanity are expressed. These three composers influenced generations of musicians to come. Grever is the precursor of the romantic song and the Mexican bolero; which Agustín Lara developed and promoted worldwide, influencing nations with this Cuban form that he made his own. Tata Nacho "Father of the Mexican Song" encouraged the establishment of the Mexican Society of Artists and Composers and invented the Mexican trio ensemble (Trio Veneno), which became the model for ensembles like "Los Panchos" of the golden age of the *canción* among many other accomplishments.

This era of Mexican music is yet to be well defined; there are questions that remain to be answered. For instance, María Grever stated in more than one occasion that

she was born on a ship while here parents were on a trip to Spain. Agustín Lara affirmed that a jealous prostitute made the scar in his face while other reports say it was the lover's prostitute that wounded the artist. Tata Nacho often had different accounts about the inspiration of his works. Perhaps, it was their way to create expectation and wonder for their audiences. We might never know the correct answers, but we certainly have room for more exploration about the society in which they lived and the reasons for their compositions and if everything else fails, we will still enjoy their legacy of their canciones.

Since we can trace the origins of the *Canción* back to Italy and Spain, can we then assume that the "Latin love" stereotype pervades this music? The answer is, yes. Love in all forms and expressions are the main topic of the *Canción*. Love to the land of the ancestors like "Granada" or love to the cherished homeland like "La Borrachita"; or passionate love like "Júrame." Indeed, they are all love songs. Blame it on the romance language, the Spaniards, Italians, French or the Greeks. After all, we all are Latin.

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